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BY his conduct of the final stage of the Round Table Conference the Prime Minister has done much towards removing the suspicion and hostility that have been engendered during the past fortnight. The door which was almost closed has been reopened. There is now at least a chance that the committees that are to continue the work of the Conference in India will not be wrecked by a non-co-operation campaign. The pity is that Mr. MacDonald did not take a similar line a fortnight ago. Even now we are very far from happy about the situation. The promulgation of the new Bengal Ordinances, with their extraordinary provisions for trial in the absence of the accused, and for the death penalty for attempted murder, have come at a peculiarly unfortunate moment. Sir John Anderson, who has just been appointed to govern Bengal, is one of the ablest of English Civil Servants, but he has the disadvantage of having been at Dublin Castle during the "Black and Tan" period. The increase of "terrorism" in Bengal may justify stricter measures, but it also raises the fundamental question of how long on such terms we ought to try to retain our position in India.

* * *

It will in any case be difficult to wipe out the evil effects of the last few weeks. The procedure adopted forced the Liberal and Labour delegates, as well as all sections of the Indians, to feel that the Government had ceased to believe in the method of framing a constitution by negotiation. Repeated efforts were made to close the Conference before it could have an opportunity of discussing any of the vital questions. The part which Lord Sankey had to play in saving the Government from making any earlier declaration of policy undermined the confidence which the Indian delegates had formerly felt in him. The interviews which Sir Samuel Hoare gave to some of the leading delegates added to the feeling that the Government had decided on some course of action which would not be affected by any representations from Indians. Even Lord Reading, who played a statesmanlike part, was always careful to explain that he was only expressing his personal views.

* * *

The point in the Prime Minister's statement for which everyone was waiting was the procedure he proposed to adopt during the coming year. There was no reason why this should not have been discussed, at least

informally, during the last week. Even Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, to whom Lord Sankey rightly referred as the "foreman of works," was never consulted on this question. The proposal to keep in being a working committee of the Conference is sound enough, but its effectiveness depends on its powers and the manner in which it is going to work. About this even the most moderate Indian politicians are still highly suspicious. It should have been easy to discuss the future of the Conference with those who would probably be on the working committee, and to obtain from them, if they were satisfied, a promise of their co-operation. Instead of this, a return has been made to the old tradition, according to which the Indian's part is, as Mr. Wedgwood Benn has put it, to "open his mouth and shut his eyes." In these circumstances it was not surprising that Mr. Gandhi should have entered his caveat in the complimentary speech which was the only comment allowed to the Conference.

* * *

There was a marked improvement early this week in the Manchurian situation, and it looked as if the patience and persistence of the League Council were at last to be rewarded. A resolution was drawn up covering the terms of evacuation and the sending out of the Commission of Inquiry. The Chinese no longer insisted on a definite date for the completion of the Japanese withdrawal. The Japanese were indeed more reluctant to make concessions. They pressed for the right to deal with banditry; but the Council—quite properly, we think—refused to agree to this, for it might, as interpreted by General Honjo and the Japanese War Office, easily stultify the whole settlement. They also view with disfavour (for reasons which are not at all clear) the proposal that the International Commission shall have five members instead of three. Nor do they want the Commission, when it arrives on the spot, to report to the League Council on the progress made in evacuation, for this would savour of control of their military activities. But none of these obstacles appears insuperable. What is much more serious is a new hitch over the proposed "neutral zone" in South-west Manchuria. Japan's demands in connection with this may produce another deadlock.

* * *

M. Flandin's week-end visit to England caused a good deal of flutter, and may have some important results. The French Minister of Finance came as a private guest; the newspapers told us all about his guns and golf clubs and plus-fours. But, of course, he talked business when he was here, and he talked business with his colleagues on his return to Paris. The exchange and tariffs are prickly problems both for France and for us. It is not in the French interest that the pound should go on depreciating. If it does, they will presumably raise their 15 per cent. surtax on our exports, and the difficulties of our coal trade and corresponding difficulties on their side will be intensified. It is plain that the tariff tussle is already serious—and it will shortly be plainer still, when retail prices begin to go up. "Commercial negotiations" are now expected between the British and French sections of the "International Suicide Club"; lipstick and lettuces will bargain with coal and cotton. We may get a little mutual relief this way. But there remain a number of other countries to be squared—including Germany, with her commercial debts and her reparations and Herr Hitler awaiting his moment. The issues will not be settled by a private powwow between London and Paris. And they will not be avoided by our trying to creep into that imperial "better 'ole" to which "Old Bill" Beaverbrook beckons us.

* * *

The Prime Minister announced on Wednesday the names of the chief British delegates to the forthcoming Disarmament Conference. They included himself, the Foreign Secretary and the Dominions Secretary, besides the heads of the three fighting services. It seems, then, that the Government has not yet been persuaded—and we hope it will not be—that the Conference should be postponed. The *Times* on Tuesday flew a big kite for postponement. The omens are unfavourable, it argued; it would be a thousand pities to risk failure next February. And it invited Germany, which has most at stake, to take the initiative in asking for postponement. But, according to the *Times* Berlin correspondent, Germany has no intention of doing anything of the sort. The Germans, unlike the French and unlike a section of the Conservatives in this country, are extremely anxious for the Conference to take place without delay. For our part we think they are right—not merely for their own sake, but for everybody's. Of course, there is a risk that nothing serious will be done. But far greater mischief would result from giving it all up as a bad job in advance.

* * *

The Government, yielding to the pressure of farming interests, has undertaken to impose a wheat quota. The Cabinet is said to have accepted the quota unanimously; but many of their Liberal supporters are pledged to oppose it. Its introduction after the recess, therefore, seems to threaten the first breach in "National" solidarity. The plan of a wheat quota bristles with difficulties. The general character of these difficulties is obvious even before the details of the scheme are known. First, a quota for British wheat will not seem of much value to the wheat grower unless there is a guaranteed price. But a guaranteed price implies either a bread subsidy—which is said not to be forthcoming—or a rise in the price of the loaf. An increase of ½d., the least that can be expected, means a bread tax amounting in the aggregate to perhaps £10,000,000 a year, and falling mainly upon the wage-earner. Secondly, the quota will imply, presumably, the control by tariff or otherwise of imports of flour. Thirdly, what is to happen to other cereals? If the wheat quota is accepted, the pressure from the oats and barley interests will become a source of great embarrassment; the growers of these crops, if not accommodated, will threaten to change over to wheat. And why should the principle of the quota be confined to cereals? Wheat is really a relatively unimportant crop in this country—some four per cent. of our agricultural production: producers of meat, poultry and butter can put up a better case. Finally, what of the Dominions? It can hardly be expected that the Empire Free Traders will allow their case to go by default; in short, Sir John Gilmour,

in his promise of a wheat quota, has opened up a veritable nest of hornets.

* * *

The most important thing about Mr. Runciman's new schedule of dutiable imports is that it does not include iron and steel. There has been strong pressure from the heavy industries to get their products protected; and it was thought there was a chance of the Government giving way—and perhaps splitting in the process. For the imposition of duties on imported steel would mean a complete acceptance of the protectionist case—something very different from the hesitant essays in semi-prohibition to which Mr. Runciman has hitherto limited his innovations. If steel were protected now, even as a temporary measure, it would be absurd to regard the question of protection in general as being still *sub judice*. For, if the case of the steel producers were admitted, whose claims could be refused? Imported steel is mostly crude steel—the raw material of our finishing trades. The home producer has already received a large measure of protection from the fall in the pound, especially against Belgium and Germany, which are the main sources of our imports. Further protection by means of a tariff would be bound to react seriously on the exports of the finishing trades—on tinplate exports, for example. Clearly, if there is to be any real inquiry at all, steel cannot be protected until that inquiry has been made.

* * *

Lancashire is now seriously threatened with a general lock-out in the spinning section of the cotton trade. The master cotton spinners want not merely to reduce wages, but to enforce a reversion to the former working week of 52½ hours. It is inconceivable that such terms should be accepted by the Trade Unions, however wretched their present economic position may be. From every point of view, the abolition of the forty-eight hour working week would be a disaster. It would destroy all hope of getting the Washington Hours Convention ratified in European countries; and it would certainly be followed by a lengthening of working hours both elsewhere in Europe and in the Far East. It is difficult, even now, to believe that the master spinners seriously mean to attempt enforcement of such a demand. But notices have been given, and there is as yet no sign of their withdrawal. Meanwhile, the negotiations on the weaving side of the industry over the "more looms" question—on which the operatives might have been more accommodating—have made no progress; but the weaving employers have not joined the master spinners in their move to increase hours. That is, at any rate, something to be thankful for.

* * *

The heavy fall in the value of the pound has continued during the past week, and there have been many attempts to explain it—or explain it away. The fundamental reason for it appears to be seasonal pressure, due to the need to pay about this time of year for a large part of our imports from America. Now that we are off gold, seasonal pressure of this sort is able to operate without hindrance upon the rates of exchange. Under more normal conditions, this would tend to bring certain important correctives into action, and especially to cause foreigners to buy sterling in confident hope of its appreciation when the seasonal pressure is over. But the exchange restrictions imposed by banks and Governments in many countries at present make such operations difficult or impossible, while our own banking system is not in a position to undertake "pegging" as it ordinarily would. The seasonal factors, therefore, produce their full effect; and this is further accentuated by the loss of confidence which it tends to cause. There have been fairly heavy withdrawals of funds just lately by Continental bankers, despite the losses involved in repatriating money at the present rates. Sterling is now almost certainly too low in relation to its purchasing power; and it ought to revive as soon as the seasonal pressure is relaxed. But the state of the pound is not by any means the Chancellor's only trouble. There is the difficulty of getting in the Income Tax, and there is also a heavy fall in the Excise receipts, in spite of largely increased duties. This shows, unmistakably, that capacity to pay, even in the form of indirect taxes, is reaching the breaking point. The wage-earner is drinking less beer, the bourgeoisie less whisky; and not because temperance propaganda is making particular headway, but because one cannot get a quart of liquor into the pint pot of a shrinking income.

* * *

Miss Hilda Matheson's resignation of her post at Savoy Hill means that the public will at length become aware of the struggle that has been going on within the B.B.C. Miss Matheson has been Director of Talks for five years. She has done a magnificent job. The talks had to be created as a national service of education and discussion, and it was Miss Matheson who saw from the beginning what this service could be and might become. She has steered the department past innumerable obstacles—the interests that were against its development and the frightened people who would have had the air closed to debate. To Miss Matheson belongs a very large part of the credit which this country has earned for the best radio service in the world. Her resignation at this moment when two new Governors of the B.B.C. are shortly to be appointed must be the signal for a full and open discussion. The public must know why Miss Matheson has resigned and what issues lie behind her resignation.

* * *

We have before us two issues of the *Daily Express*. On page 3 of the issue of October 30th there is a small photograph of a crane unloading casks or cases on to the ground. Beneath it is written:

> TREASURE CHESTS.—A truck-load of gold at Victoria Station yesterday. It was part of a large consignment on its way to France from the United States.

The second copy of the *Daily Express* (dated November 24th) contains on page 5 an article by H. Wynn Jones, "*Daily Express* Agricultural Correspondent," entitled "Where Does Russian Butter Go?" Inset in this article is a larger replica of precisely the same photograph as that which appeared on page 3 of the issue of October 30th. But on this occasion the caption underneath reads:

> THE HEART OF EMPIRE.—And in it a great cargo of unwanted Soviet butter. Where is the sense or logic of this?

Where, indeed—or the honesty either?

THE DEAD HAND

THE Greeks, from whom the modern world is still content to take some of its political ideas, had a word, "seisachtheia," which all contemporary statesmen would do well to learn. For the word means a shaking off of burdens, and to this the old Greek cities had resort when their affairs had got into an exceptional tangle of debts and impositions. Threatened social systems were saved more than once by this device; and though creditors grumbled and resisted, they soon grew prosperous again when debtors were given a chance of making a fresh start. In old Greece, indeed, the choice was sometimes between "seisachtheia" and revolution. The same choice confronts us in the world to-day.

But the burdens we need to shake off are far more numerous and entangled than any the Greeks ever had to remove. For our world is weighed down by a mass of indebtedness of almost every possible sort. There are debts internal and debts international, debts public and debts private, long-term debts and frozen short-term credits, war debts and reparations, and debts arising out of foreign investment before and since the war. There are debtor and creditor countries, as well as debtor and creditor classes within each community. And, to make confusion worse, the behaviour of money and prices in the various countries is constantly changing the realities of every debt men owe or are owed.

This vast burden of debts was bad enough in 1929, when most of the world still seemed to be in a prosperous condition. Since then two things—closely connected with each other—have combined to make it quite intolerable. The world slump has greatly contracted debtors' incomes, in terms of goods as well as of money; and the catastrophic fall of prices, affecting especially the primary goods which are for many debtors the only source of payments, has made the debts far more onerous in themselves. Everywhere profit margins have been contracted as the real value of *rentier* incomes has been increased, and this applies largely between nations as well as between individuals or business concerns.

But world depression, if it has made it far harder for debtors to pay, has not made it easier for creditors to forgive. For the creditor nations and individuals have also their own troubles of unbalanced budgets or income and expenditure accounts, and the payments due from debtors are for them a very handy way of just making both ends meet. American banks, struggling with domestic adversity and compelled to write down drastically the value of their security holdings, would not at all relish the cancellation of the debts owing to them by German banks and syndicates. Great Britain, with her big adverse trade balance, would not at all like to forgive struggling countries the interest on her overseas investments. And France, while she is suffering much less from the slump than the rest of the world, is in no mood to forgo the payments she holds due to her on account of the old, and not fully repaired, injuries which she suffered in the war. Circumstances have, indeed, forced on the world a moratorium in respect of war debts and reparations, and a "standstill" agreement in respect of foreign short-term credits in Germany. But only a clear recognition that collapse and repudiation were the sole alternatives wrested even these concessions from the creditor nations; and since then precious month after month has been wasted without any approach to a more lasting solution.

Every sensible person, at least in Great Britain, now realises that there can be no return to world economic health without a really drastic scaling-down of war debts and reparations between countries, if not their complete cancellation. Most people see that the logical accompaniment of this process is a writing-down of internal public debts as well. But Great Britain would not take kindly to a writing-off of even part of her fixed-interest-bearing investments overseas or of her short-term loans to Germany and other debtor countries. People have found it fairly easy to be sensible about international war debts and reparations, because the sums we pay and receive under these heads approximately balance. They are then apt to suppose that they are the only people in the world who are looking at the whole problem in a spirit of cold common-sense, and to express shocked surprise at the conduct and attitude of other countries. Wipe off war debts and reparations altogether, and Great Britain will be directly neither much better nor much worse off than before. But she will be indirectly much better off because of the prospect of better trade; and moreover, her citizens are apt to add, the difficulties of foreigners in paying what they owe to British subjects will have been removed. British bankers, business creditors and investors look forward to a merry time collecting what they are owed, as soon as war debts and reparations are out of the way.

Can we reasonably expect the situation to appear to the French in quite the same light? The French are heavy net creditors on account of war debts and reparations, and would tend, if they were cancelled, to get a good deal less income from abroad. We may say, first, that France is in this position only because she has successfully repudiated, or evaded, most of her own foreign obligations, whereas we have not; and we may add that, with her stock of gold and her favourable balance of payments, she can afford to make concessions far better than Great Britain. The French will reply that they suffered far worse than we did during the war, in both human and material loss, and that what we call French repudiation or evasion of debts was no more than common fairness. They will say that Germany is under a moral obligation to pay for war pensions and for the reconstruction of devastated areas; and as for being able to afford concessions, they will point out that their standard of life is still a good deal lower than ours. Why, they will ask, should not the Englishman tighten his belt at last? He has been fat and prosperous for too long.

The French have, moreover, an additional quarrel with the British and American attitude to German debts. British and American citizens have given large short-term credits to Germany of late years, and French people have not; and, in addition, Americans have invested in Germany large masses of long-term capital. The French point of view is that these loans and investments were made to a country already in debt, and ought accordingly to rank for repayment after Germany's prior obligations. As recipients of a large net sum on account of reparations, the French regard themselves as debenture-holders who have to be paid off before the claims of ordinary creditors in America and Great Britain can rank for dividend. This is the real substance of the excited quarrel at present in progress about the relative priority of reparations and commercial debts.

Of course, the British-American answer is that, unless fresh loans had been made to Germany on both long and short term, she would have collapsed long ago, and the French would have been quite unable to collect their reparations, even if they had reoccupied the Ruhr or annexed the entire country. French logic repels this wider dialectic, and remains firmly planted in the formal garden. For it is the way of the logical French not to distort the facts, but to select those which make a good formal case, and ignore the rest. And undoubtedly, in this matter, French politicians are as reasonable as the main body of influential French opinion.

America's point of view is also a difficulty. She is with us about commercial debts, because her bankers and investors are deeply committed in Germany and also cur-

barrassed at home; and the American Government has no desire to widen the circle of bank failures. But about war debts and reparations America, a large net creditor, is not with us yet, for two reasons. The first is that a great mass of American opinion, expecially among those who are in personal financial troubles, merely says, "Why should not Europe pay? We cannot afford to be philanthropists now." And the second is that even instructed American opinion does not want to make concessions without getting something in return, and is not convinced that a mere scaling-down, or even a cancelling, of war debts and reparations will set Europe again on its feet. It wants, in addition, guarantees about such matters as disarmament, and clear signs that Europe will in future pull together in a real attempt to solve its problems. So enlightened American opinion is hesitant, and backwoods opinion hostile; and the result is the lack of really forceful initiative from the United States.

Yet something far-reaching must be done quickly, if Germany is not to collapse and default, bringing down with her a number of other countries and, at the least, making Great Britain's international situation very precarious indeed. Already there are serious difficulties in financing trade in Germany, on account of the uncertainty of conditions even three months ahead. The "standstill" agreement for short-term debts ends in February, and it is clear that Germany cannot then release the frozen credits her creditors want back. The Hoover moratorium itself ends in the summer; but it is clear that Germany will have no surplus for reparations, except by default at her other creditors' expense. Despite the French attitude, the Young Plan has really gone by the board, like the Dawes Plan before it. The only alternatives are either a new and far more rational settlement on a quite different basis, or German collapse and default, followed by who knows what chaos and internecine warfare in Europe. Or perhaps there is the third alternative of tiding over again for a few more months, with emergency arrangements that are likely to leave the situation worse in the end than it is now.

The prospects of a satisfactory settlement certainly look bad enough. The French are standing pat on the Young Plan, at the very least to the extent of the unconditional annuities, and probably beyond that. We are saying that we cannot afford to compromise on short-term debts, and the Americans want the interest on their investments as well. But that means no reparations. The deadlock appears to be complete.

But it may not be quite so complete as it looks. For, when it really comes to the point, will the French push Germany over the edge, or draw back at the last moment? Are they really eager for a new Ruhr occupation, and perhaps a guerrilla war with Hitlerites and Communists? Will they not, in the very last resort, show a more accommodating mood? And, if they do, shall not we have to make concessions about short-term debts as well, even at the expense of our bankers and our balance of payments? It is an unpleasant prospect, of course, but certainly for us far less unpleasant than the collapse of Germany. There is still hope that common sense will prevail before it is too late, at least to the extent of patching up something to carry us over the next year or two. It is difficult to hope for more than that, and even for that we can only hope without much assurance.

Finally, even if there is a settlement, and the best we can hope for, on war debts and reparations and German commercial debts, that will by no means settle everything. It will only clear the way for a wider reconsideration of debt burdens over the whole world. But that is another matter, and far too large to embark upon now. The German debt question is the question that the world must answer swiftly, or face economic collapse.

THE WHEAT QUOTA

IN commenting on the fact that a Board of some kind will be necessary to operate the Wheat Marketing Scheme proposed by the Government, a well-known Conservative said the other day: "The Government has had to adopt a chunk of Socialism because the farmers won't co-operate." My reply was that it was a small "chunk" anyhow and that the description of it must depend upon how it was worked, what powers the Board had, and so forth. It may degenerate into a mere protectionist device, or it may be made very helpful in promoting improvements in agriculture.

Wheat undoubtedly possesses an importance in cultivation that extends far beyond the small proportion it represents of the cash value of our home agricultural products, and this accounts for the fact that the older generation of farmers and the usual spokesmen of agriculture have continually talked as if a good price for wheat were the one thing required to put agriculture right. Indeed, the Conference that was got together by Lord Noel-Buxton in the early days of the Labour Government could not be persuaded to give attention to anything else.

The cash value of home-produced beef is five times that of wheat, milk six times—and the same might be true of milk products if surpluses were dealt with in a businesslike way—and the possibilities of expansion of bacon production are nearly as great; even the product of the humble hen is of twice the value of the wheat crop, and might be doubled. These things, however, and others like them, have scarcely been mentioned in the sporadic controversies of the past forty years on the demand for protective duties on imported wheat.

There are two reasons for this. The first is that those farmers who have been chiefly stock-raisers or milk-producers have had less to complain of than the arable farmers, and the second is that wheat growing—or really the problem of successful arable cultivation—does, in fact, represent the kernel of the agricultural problem in a large part of England. In the lighter lands with lower rainfall in the Eastern Counties there must be periodical ploughing if fertility is to be retained. Agricultural science has not yet shown how this can be dispensed with, and much of the land that has been "let down" to grass fails to provide pasture with a sufficient stock-carrying capacity. In the years that intervene between ploughings a greater amount of food for stock can be obtained per acre than would otherwise have been the case; but if the year of arable cultivation represents a loss, and a large proportion of the farm is arable, the whole process gets out of joint because the development of alternative productions has not been made to compensate for the loss on the cereal acreage.

The intense individualism of the isolated farmer and his slowness to change or to appreciate the vast advantages of organisation have exaggerated these adverse influences and led to a disastrous neglect of those alternative productions for which much of our land is favourable and our market unique. For example, Suffolk and some parts of Norfolk are perhaps better suited for large-scale bacon production than any other parts of the country, and parts of Norfolk, Cambridge and Lincoln should be much more fully used for intensive cultivation.

In framing policy, however, we have to take account of things as they are, and try to shape our policy so that it will lead to right developments. With these considerations in mind, therefore, in the second instalment of agricultural policy that I submitted to the Cabinet during the summer, I included proposals for stabilised price conditions for good-class wheat and barley for a term of years, during which there was to be an active promotion of the development of alternative productions—bacon, poultry and others.

The Government has picked out the proposals that related to the marketing of home-grown wheat. They can be operated by themselves if it is so decided, but they cannot be of much permanent value if they are divorced from the proper accompanying conditions, which include not only the encouragement of improvements in arable cultivation, but the deliberate promotion of the production and better marketing of alternative products. It is obviously desirable that bread should be as cheap as possible, and there should be cheap and abundant supplies of feeding stuffs for stock, poultry and milk production. Means, therefore, had to be devised for dealing separately with the home ingredient of our wheat supplies, which, on the average, amounts to about fifteen per cent. For reasons that need not be elaborated now, I am convinced that organised home-marketing must be linked up with the importing side, but a controlling agency or board is necessary in any case.

It should be the business of this Wheat Board, subject to a maximum beyond which it could not go, to arrange a scale of prices which would place a premium upon the growth of the best quality wheats. In order also to check any uneconomical extension of wheat acreage, I suggested that the maximum price should fall a little year by year during the appointed term of years. The Board also would adjust, from time to time, the proportion of the home-crop that the market would absorb, make the necessary arrangements with the milling and flour-importing industries and be able to safeguard the public in the matter of bread prices. This last function is of great importance and is necessary in order to secure public confidence, because the powerlessness of the present Food Council to control the excessive margin between flour and bread prices is notorious and has often been displayed.

In my scheme there was included a Producers' Board, formed under the Marketing Act, for dealing with day-to-day operations, for operating the provisions by which advances might be made to farmers on account of wheat to be marketed and for other necessary duties. In present circumstances there will not be time to get such a Board created and able to deal with the 1932 harvest, so that we may expect an *ad hoc* body to be created for these purposes. We found that it was impracticable to work a scheme under which there would be a physical admixture at all mills of stated proportions of home-grown wheat and to apply the scheme fairly to flour importers, so that a system of certificates was devised, which would be issued on the sale of the wheat, which would be transferable and held for subsequent cancellation. Much time was spent by officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and of the Customs in conference with interested parties and otherwise in hammering out the details of a workable scheme.

The details need not concern us here, but it must be recognised that the plan will be only a lop-sided and partial contribution to agricultural policy unless it is associated with machinery designed to promote the other necessary concomitant aims, amongst which the safeguarding of the agricultural labourers' wages is one of the most important. In the end the scheme must be judged by the extent to which it enables us to make good past neglect and to make a full and efficient use of our splendid countryside.

C. ADDISON.

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT GETS TO WORK

WE sought your confidence. We seek it still.
The bears rampage and sterling slides downhill;
The East's gone west; disarmament's a mockery;
But—praised be God!—we've shut out foreign broccoli.

H. P.

A LONDON DIARY

MR. THOMAS is not the kind of statesman who happens to appeal to me. In the old days when he was Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Labour Cabinet, I sat with him on a committee. He was there in the capacity of Minister and I was there in the capacity of an expert. Man to man and hail-fellow-well-met, we got on excellently, but from the point of view of business and politics our collaboration was a failure. Like many other experts, I failed to get Mr. Thomas to begin to understand the problem, let alone anything so complicated as a policy. And it is just because I like Mr. Thomas "the card," but not Mr. Thomas the statesman, that I feel sorry for him. For fate and Mr. MacDonald have dealt rather hardly with him these last years. In the Labour Cabinet they put him in charge of the most difficult of all jobs and one for which he was most unsuitable, unemployment. They sat him down at a table, with a dour and eminent Civil Servant by his side. Poor Mr. Thomas, instead of being allowed to tell his funny stories, was made to read files, as the Civil Service calls them. Whenever anyone suggested any method of dealing with the great problem of unemployment, the eminent Civil Servant put another file on Mr. Thomas's table. Nothing more was ever heard of that method of dealing with unemployment, for Mr. Thomas's statesmanship is not of the kind which reads files or understands what is within them. And we all know what the Labour Cabinet's and Mr. Thomas's record was with regard to the problem of unemployment.

* * *

And now fate and Mr. MacDonald have given poor Mr. Thomas a not dissimilar problem. He has been put in charge of Imperial Preference. I daresay at first, having read his *Evening Standard* and listened to the Empire Free Traders, he thought it all plain sailing. You only have to whack on a duty there and give a preference here, and the more the merrier, cried Lord Beaverbrook and the Empire Free Traders. Mr. Thomas had a brilliant idea. No more sitting at tables; no more eminent Civil Servants; no more files. He would go on an extended tour of the Dominions—to Newfoundland, to Canada, to South Africa, to far-off New Zealand and Australia. He would discuss Imperial Preference and Empire Free Trade with the Dominion Premiers and tell his funny stories—the kind of statesmanship for which he is eminently suited. But alas, the problem of fitting a tariff to the whole British Empire is one of the most difficult and complex economic problems that can be imagined. It is almost as complicated as that of unemployment, and Mr. Thomas will probably be as successful in solving it as he was in solving the latter. At any rate, the *Times* and now Mr. MacDonald have given him a hint about the enormous amount of preparatory work which will have to be done here between this and the Conference in July. He is to abandon his tour. He may visit South Africa—for four days—and then return to his office-desk, his files and Civil Servants.

* * *

The November issue of that very remarkable French periodical *Le Crapouillot* has just been officially censored. I first read of this in a still more remarkable Paris journal, *Le Monde*, which has Barbusse as director and Einstein and Maxim Gorki on its directing committee. The censored paper contained an extraordinary collection of anti-British cartoons most of which appeared in the French press during the Fashoda and Boer war period. If a collection of English anti-French cartoons and utterances were made, I think they would prove equally savage, though rather more decent. What was it the *Daily Mail* said in that pre-hats-off-to-France period? "Nothing like an *entente cordiale* can subsist between England and her nearest neighbour." . . . "If they (the French) cannot cease their insults. their colonies will be taken from them and given to Germany and Italy—we

ourselves want nothing more—and France will be rolled in the blood and mud in which her press daily wallows." But the French were coarser in their methods. One impertinent picture which a writer in the *Evening Standard*, who has seen the censored edition of *Le Crapouillot* thinks the most indecent of the lot is a "caricature (censored at the time) in which the bare seat of an unchaste Britannia is represented by the face of King Edward." I wonder whether the idea for this caricature was suggested by a real incident which is described in Mr. H. E. Wortham's recent book *The Delightful Profession* (Cape, 10s. 6d)? Mr. Wortham there gives a frank account of the entertainments provided for King Edward, then Prince of Wales, at the Moulin Rouge, and one of La Goulue's turns included an exhibition very similar to that portrayed in the caricature. It seems likely that the artist got his idea from La Goulue.

* * *

The Foundling site is once again in danger. At the beginning of this year an appeal was launched, and by the early summer had been approved by the Mansion House. The appeal was proceeding to success with the co-operation of the L.C.C. and all the interested boroughs with the exception of St. Pancras; then came the financial crisis. It was not an appeal on the lines at first contemplated — to preserve the whole site as an open space. For the purpose of the public appeal the estate was divided into two halves. It was contemplated that at first immediate energy should be directed towards the preservation of the southern half of the estate as a private open space and well-managed recreation ground for children of the neighbourhood. The purchase of the northern half was to be postponed until later, and then undertaken by the public authorities of London. The present position is serious; subscriptions are needed for the appeal for the southern half, and a new policy is needed for the preservation of the whole site. The arrangement agreed upon provided that the southern half should also be divided into two for the purpose of purchase. Mrs. Trevelyan's Committee proposed to raise £118,000 for their section of the southern half, and Lord Rothermere generously offered to purchase the other half of the southern section provided that the £118,000 was raised by Mrs. Trevelyan's Committee. Mrs. Trevelyan's Committee is yet short of £18,000. The L.C.C. and the borough councils have announced a determined policy of economy in regard to capital expenditure; and there has thus arisen a very grave predicament in relation to the northern half. The address of Mrs. Trevelyan's Appeal Committee is 93, Guilford Street, W.C.1; the present position is such that it is not possible to name *any* organisation whose purpose is the preservation of the whole area for general public use at some future time.

* * *

Several correspondents have pointed out that the solution of the five tradesmen puzzle given last week assumes that husbands who married sisters can be described as brothers-in-law. If this assumption is considered inadmissable, it must be assumed that the coalman's namesake as well as the grocer's namesake is a brother-in-law of the butcher. In this case Jones becomes the grocer and Brown the baker. Many readers have sent in correct solutions of last week's puzzle—1, 3, 9, 27. Here's another:

Chilidor and Parazil are two neighbouring American States. Their currencies (dollars and cents) are regarded as interchangeable. Owing to a trading dispute, however, the Chilidor Government enacts that within its frontiers the Parazil dollar shall be worth only 90 cents. The Parazil Government similarly depreciates the dollar of Chilidor. At the frontier town of Sezu in Parazil, a traveller buys 10 cents' worth of wine at an estaminet. He tenders a Parazil dollar, and receives a Chilidor dollar in exchange. He crosses the frontier, and buys a second drink at an estaminet in Chilidor, receiving this time a Parazil dollar. He continues to do this till he cannot tell one dollar from another.

Who pays for the traveller's drinks? CRITIC.

THIS RENT QUESTION

THE Rent Restriction Act has been again renewed and the main arguments on both sides once more repeated. The theorists who still retain a faith in *laisser faire* do little more than reaffirm that faith, with examples of the anomalies of the present position. With them are landlords and agents who say frankly that they want freedom to earn their living in an open market, and that no other commodity or service than houseroom is subject to such severe restriction by an arbitrary fixing of price level. On the same side are many genuine housing reformers who point out, *inter alia*, the direct incitement offered by the present system to unfair methods of "decontrolling" houses; the monstrous profiteering in so-called furnished rooms; the rack-rents charged by working-class people as well as others for sub-lets in houses let on long-term leases at a small head rent; and the direct discouragement to private building for working-class people who will obviously not pay a fair rent for a new house while they can pay an unfairly low one for an old house. This last argument is rarely used in my experience by people with first hand knowledge.

It is significant that in spite of the strength of these opinions, held by most Conservatives and many Liberals, and in spite of the truthful boast that this country has done more than any other in the way of State-subsidised building since the war, the Rent Restriction Act is repassed each year. Fear of the result in the constituencies if the Act were allowed to lapse is urged in explanation, but it is no explanation. The truth is, as every M.P. knows, that without the Act there would be, almost immediately, such chaos as few of us dare to contemplate. There is still a house famine among the poorer-paid workers. There is still acute overcrowding; families are frequently living at a density of six or more persons in one room. In large towns children are being brought up in dark, and sometimes damp, basements; in small towns and country villages there are people occupying dilapidated and insanitary houses. "Key money," letting rooms with a strip of linoleum and a curtain-rod (to quote one of many examples known to me) at "furnished" rents, and similar devices for exploiting the homeless, are still very common.

But there is another factor in the situation. It is eight years since a Conservative Government passed the Act which set in motion the gradual process of decontrol. No doubt Mr. Neville Chamberlain and his colleagues hoped that long before now there would be full decontrol. They have realised the impossibility of this in view of trade depression and millions of unemployed, but the 1923 Act is doing its insidious work. The results have been increasingly noticeable, but this year they are much more important than they have been before.

A few examples, taken at random, are enough to demonstrate the difference between "controlled" and "decontrolled" rents for the same accommodation:

(*A*) Two rooms in the basement of a large old London house, let for many years at an inclusive weekly rent of 7s. 9d. The tenants left and the rooms were re-let at £1 1s.

A similar basement in a rather superior street was re-let to two tenants at a rate of 15s. *for each room.*

(*B*) One small room at the top of a house, "controlled" rent 3s. 9d., has been re-let to succeeding tenants for a larger rent each time, and is now let at 13s.

These examples, of increases of 250 per cent., do not represent an average, but are much commoner in every part of the country than is generally supposed. The typical increase is from 50 per cent. to 100 per cent. But since there is no check on the upward movement of the curve, next year's average may be much higher.

The seriousness of the present position is in (1) the number of the unemployed, (2) the number of workers doing part-

time work and averaging very small incomes, and (3) the number of full-time workers with reduced pay.

The position is serious in two ways: first, because an increasing number of tenants will be evicted for arrears of rent, and their rooms become decontrolled; secondly, because even the controlled rent is now beyond the reasonable ability to pay of the poorer worker and the unemployed.

Last week an unemployed man, with a delicate wife and seven children, applied to the Public Assistance Committee for leave to do 32 hours' work and earn 6s. worth of grocery in addition to the £1 18s. 3d. he was drawing in Unemployment Insurance Benefit. The Chairman of the Committee told him he ought not to need more than £1 18s. 3d., and asked for details as to how the money was spent. On hearing that 16s. 6d. went in rent the Chairman remarked: "You shouldn't pay rent when you are on the dole. The money is meant for food and clothing." The man suggested that his landlord would disagree; so, probably, would most Public Assistance Committees—but the question raised by the Chairman in this instance is clearly of the utmost importance. Can the unemployed pay rent? They may be able to do so for a few weeks, but as the family clothing wears out, and there is illness, and more firing is needed, the answer appears to be that they cannot.

Another typical instance may be given. A skilled electrician, never out of work, has just had another reduction in his rate of pay and hours of work, and earns 1s. 2d. an hour for a 30-hour week—35s. He has a wife and one child, and his rent is 14s. (for two rooms). With one child he will be able to pay it, at the cost of considerable privation. If he had four or five children, either they would be short of food or the rent could not be paid. Even a rent of 7s., or 20 per cent. of the total income, is far too high where the total income is 35s. a week. Many of the poorer paid workers in this country are at present spending 30 per cent. of their income in rent, and rent for totally inadequate accommodation. Most council houses or flats so far built, with separate bedrooms for parents and for boys and girls, and no beds in the living-room, are totally beyond their means, even if they were available.

One thing should be done, and done quickly, if we are to prevent a tragic loss of vitality among children whose parents are now faced with the necessity of "keeping a roof over their heads" at the expense of the food bill. The clauses in the 1923 Act which brought about decontrol should be repealed, and all houses and rooms decontrolled as a result of that Act should be brought again within the jurisdiction of the Rent Restriction Act. At the same time special machinery should be set in motion at the County Courts for dealing with anomalies and grievances without long delays.

This course is full of difficulties and dangers, but both are preferable to the present state of affairs and the position into which a policy of drift will lead us by next year. There is space only to deal briefly with the most obvious danger: that many landlords, with no incentive to improve their property and little chance of ridding themselves of their poorest tenants, would economise to a disastrous extent on their repair bills, and the last state of our slums would be worse than the first. This is another way of saying that local authorities would fail to enforce the law. They have it in their power both to insist on the proper upkeep of all houses which are tenantable, and to use the 1930 Slum Clearance Act to rehouse all those of their ratepayers who are not living in tenantable houses. For the first time this Act gives them the opportunity to build at a trifling cost to the rates houses to let at rents within the means of the majority of those who need them.

IRENE T. BARCLAY.

ON EDGE

IT has been observed times without number that the passions of men are strange and various. One of these passions—the passion for listening-in to foreign stations on the wireless—I had often heard of; but, by good or bad fortune, I had never been in any house in which an infatuated member of the human race was engaged in experiments of this kind. I had never myself possessed an instrument that reached far beyond London, and any of my friends who had more powerful sets had been considerate enough to switch them off whenever I visited them. Hence it was for me a new experience when I called on my friend George F—— the other evening and found him stretched on the drawing-room floor, coiled round a portable set that was whistling like a mad curlew. He did not rise to greet me, but held out one hand vaguely while with the other he went on fiddling with the wireless. "I think I have got something foreign," he said eagerly; "I heard something that sounded like a foreigner speaking a second ago." He turned something, and the whistle became a protesting scream. "It's coming," he said, "wait." The diaphragm gave an angry spit, and a far-off woman's voice seemed to be trying to make itself heard through an overwhelming din. He slightly altered the direction of the set, and we undoubtedly heard something that sounded like "la question polonaise." "By George," he said, "it's Paris, listen!" We listened, but the crackling of the diaphragm made it impossible to catch more than an occasional word even if one had been able to follow spoken French easily. I was beginning to feel rather exhausted when George's wife came in and after listening for a minute or two, said, "It doesn't sound very interesting, dear." George, whose nerves were becoming jangled, retorted, "You always say that." "But," she asked him, "are *you* interested in the Polish question, especially when you know you don't understand French and that you couldn't even hear much of that on that instrument if you did?" "I'm interested in wireless," replied George sulkily, "I'm experimenting. I want to learn how to work this bally thing." "I'm sure Y. hates it," she said. "As a matter of fact," I assured her, for I realised that George felt strongly on the matter, "I'm greatly interested. I've never seen this sort of thing working before." "Well," said George, obviously relieved to have an excuse for getting away from Poland, "if you don't like talks we'll shift over to some station where we can get some music." And he turned things and changed the position of the set, which barked, wheezed, spat, screamed and whistled till at last the music of a fox-trot came through in a gloriously clear uproar.

"That," said George, excitedly, "is from somewhere abroad. You can always tell the difference. There's a natural gaiety in the way foreigners play a fox-trot. Not like the mechanical English tum-tum. Hulloa, what's that?" he cried, as a potent English voice announced: "You have been listening to 'Bidding Good-night in Nevada,' relayed from the Hotel Negresco at Westcliff-on-Sea." "Well, it's a jolly good band," said George, with a flush of humiliation. "Must be a foreign conductor. Still I didn't get a portable to listen to Westcliff." And he switched off viciously in search of Continental delights. For a time, try as he would, he could get nothing but crackling noises interrupted every now and then by the band from Westcliff, but at length a deep masculine voice began to break its way through the cacophony, while George, pale and excited, said, "Listen. This is a German station, I'll swear." The voice gradually triumphed over the other noises in the instrument, and informed us that we were to have a talk from the Bishop of Worthing on the subject: "Seaside Manners and Morals." "Oh, damn the Bishop of Worthing!" said George. "I should like to hear this," said his wife. "My dear Dorothy," protested George, "you know you always said you hated talks on the wireless."

"I'd rather have anything, even a talk," said Dorothy, "than those perfectly horrid noises you call getting Continental stations." The Bishop was saying that there are two sides to every question, that some people regarded mixed bathing as a good thing, and some as an evil, and he pleaded for a compromise on the matter that would appeal to all reasonable men. He was himself, he said, a firm believer in youth, and was convinced that the present generation, despite all that we read in the press, took a fundamentally serious view of life, and we had only to trust it in order for it to justify our trust. At that, an extremely hideous yowl, that sounded at first like the portable set trying to surpass itself, began outside the door, and Dorothy admitted an alarming-looking animal with black ears and a squint, which she said was the new Siamese cat Timmy. Timmy would not be persuaded into silence, and his queer strangled yells made it almost impossible to hear what the Bishop was saying about the harmlessness of cocktail-parties, especially as Dorothy was trying to explain to me at the same time what affectionate animals Siamese cats are. "More like dogs than cats," she said. The cat had by this time come opposite me, and was crouching on the floor with fierce eyes and lashing tail, preparing, I gathered, to spring at a dangling lace in my shoe. "I suppose," I said, nervously, "they're much tamer than they look," and I attempted to withdraw my foot. The cat sprang, and no doubt it was the sudden jerk I had given my foot that caused his claws to embed themselves so successfully in my ankle. By the time I was able to think of anything but my own troubles again, George must have switched off the Bishop, for he was crying joyously: "It's Rome or Milan. Sounds like a play in Italian. Listen," and Dorothy was caressing the cat in her arms and calling it "little velvet paws."

It was undoubtedly an Italian play that was in progress, but none of us knew Italian, and, besides, the internal noises of the portable were half-drowning the voices of the actors. George, who is an impatient man, said: "Let's try something else," and, though he was by now white and limp as a result of his perpetually defeated efforts, he stuck manfully to his task, trying short-wave lengths and long-wave lengths, till his instrument must have made every noise of which it was capable, except a clearly enunciated reproduction of human speech or an undisturbed echo of non-English music. English stations he got again and again, and every time he did so he swore bitterly at his native land under his breath. Once a beautiful Mozart song came through from Switzerland, only to fade away in less than a minute, and in spite of all his twiddling George could never recapture it, but succeeded only in extracting roars and whistles from his instrument.

"You're driving me mad," cried Dorothy, after we had had another half-hour of this, and she set the cat down on the floor, with the result that it began to make noises like a screech-owl. George worked desperately in the attempt to get Jugoslavia or some station that would justify all the agony he had inflicted. He did for a moment get a language none of us had ever heard before, but it was blended with an English dance-band, and the Siamese cat was making more noise than either, and it was with little conviction that George said it was Warsaw. Even then it was in vain that Dorothy pleaded that we had had enough for one evening. "You're only making the thing make beastly noises," she declared. George silenced the instrument and gazed at her reproachfully. "I sometimes wonder," he said, "what would have happened to Sir Isaac Newton if he had married a woman like you. How the dickens do you think I can ever learn to get these foreign stations if I'm not allowed to make experiments? Do you think Faraday discovered electro-magnetism or whatever it was, without years of experiment? Do you think Darwin—" "You're looking deathly white, George," she said, "you ought to stop." George closed the lid of the instrument, got up off the floor, and threw himself into an armchair. "Poor old Sir Isaac," he muttered, "what the dickens would he have done? I expect never have looked at an apple again!"

Y. Y.

REALISM—AND REALITY

TO me who am, as I've been told,
The most unpractical of dreamers,
'Tis most perplexing to behold
The world as run by hard-faced schemers.
Why *is*, e.g., the Kellogg Pact
A "scrap of paper" to the clever;
The Treaty of Versailles a fact
That must, it seems, endure for ever?

Dreamers alone (a dwindling crowd)
Still prate of moral obligations;
Yet realists proclaim aloud
Their "sacred right" to reparations.
When some men starve because they've made
Too many goods, and some through lack of them,
"Horse sense" puts up new bars to trade,
And leaves to dreamers the attack of them.

Since the next war, we're all agreed,
Will be more frightful than the past one
(From which, while still the vanquished bleed
So do the people who at last won),
The crazy mystics plan and scheme
For peace and armament reduction;
The practically minded dream
Of deadlier weapons of destruction.

"The symptoms we must take," insist
The hard-faced men, "just as we find them"—
Leaving the sentimentalist
To search for the disease behind them;
And watching these fantastic tricks,
I sometimes doubt the practicality
Of "realistic politics"
That shut men's eyes to all reality.

MACFLECKNOE.

Correspondence

BUY FOREIGN GOODS

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your paragraph in favour of the Buy British Goods campaign comes as a surprise. The world depression is the result of nationalistic policies, policies calculated to benefit individual nations at the expense of the rest of the world. As the depression has grown deeper the nations, in their efforts to help their own people, have adopted policies the only results of which have been to deepen still farther the general depression, and so, ultimately, to react against those people whom they were designed to assist. The general depression affected England, and certain "statesmen," although they admitted the cause to be international, have adopted a policy and a campaign calculated to arouse in the public just that state of panic which it is most essential to avoid. A majority of the electorate has voted for a National Government and indicated a policy of narrow national self-interest, a policy of protection which cannot fail to intensify the evils of the world. It is as though we were on a sinking ship and were rushing the boats in a panic, trampling each other down in our blind haste to save our own skins. Against this policy you have protested in a series of able and intelligent articles.

But these same "statesmen," who have created the panic, now as before push forward upon very much the same grounds a campaign calculated to add to the "effectiveness" of their policy of protection. "Buy," they say, "British goods. Keep out the foreigner. Why should a British workman starve while a foreigner is working?" For myself, I feel no more sympathy for a British workman out of work than for, say, a German or an American. They are both men, and both have the same capacity for suffering. The one happens to live nearer me than

the other, but it needs no very great effort of the imagination to feel for the other. If I buy British goods I may be helping a man and a country comparatively well off. If I buy, say, German goods, I may be helping to save a country which is upon the verge of collapse—and a country whose collapse will bring intense suffering to millions of its own people. If the national campaigns are generally successful—what chance is there for Central Europe? And if Central Europe suffers a series of economic breakdowns (followed, as they are liable to be, by revolutions, famines, and so on), what chance is there for civilisation?

Gradually the more intelligent are coming to realise that only by co-operation and international action shall we avert disaster; that nation cannot rise against nation, whether in a battle of guns or in a battle of trade, without trouble for the whole world. Still the blind forces of nationalism are working against co-operation. "Buy British Goods" is one of the weapons of these forces. Surely we should now buy foreign goods.—Yours, etc.,

32 Brunswick Square, W.C. 1. P. R. KIMBER.

[Economic nationalism is the devil. We agree cordially that world conditions can only be bettered by international co-operation. But in face of the sharp fall in our exports and of our receipts from overseas we simply cannot afford to buy as many foreign goods as before. In these circumstances, to "Buy British," where suitable British goods are available, is not national egoism, but an enforced makeshift in a mad situation.—ED., *N. S. & N.*]

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—May I protest against the tone in which you criticise the New Protectionist policy? You seem to me to understand neither its patriotic spirit nor its fundamental ideals.

There is some sacrifice involved in "buying British" and excluding foreign goods. No one denies it. To exclude foreign surgical instruments may result in a few extra deaths or a certain amount of mutilation or pain which the foreign instrument might have prevented. I further confess that, as far as mere pleasure is concerned, I prefer French champagne to the synthetic Birmingham variety—which is, however, improving month by month and will no doubt in time be most palatable.

I admit the sacrifice, but the end is worth it. The true object is not so much to prevent the foreigner selling to us, but to prevent him from buying. Hitherto we have allowed him, and almost encouraged him, to buy up all our most choice products and turn them to his own uses. We have the finest coal in the world. Why should foreigners be allowed the use of it? Our Sheffield cutlery is unequalled; yet until lately it was more used by foreigners than by Englishmen! It makes one's blood boil to see brave Lancashire lads and lasses labouring long days in cotton mills to fulfil the orders of semi-savage Chinese and disloyal Indians. Worse still, who does not blush to see our ships, our splendid ships, steaming round the world filled with foreign merchandise and serving as common carriers to foreign exporters?

All that must be changed. Let the foreigner weave his own clothes and carry his own goods. Let us keep our labour for ourselves. Let us boldly put an end to all this greedy international huckstering, and concentrate upon our true staple trades—drink, the cinema, betting, and advertising, and the growing of those cereals, such as wheat and tobacco, for which our climate is peculiarly unsuited.—Yours, etc.,

NEVILLE PAGE ROTHERBROOK.

CENSORSHIP

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In connection with the onslaught upon free speech and free publication, upon which you made comment in your last issue, an incident of some significance has taken place.

A group of senior and junior members of this University having combined to produce a monthly political review under the title of *Plan*, and production of the same having reached the final stages, it was intended to commence distribution on Friday last. Delivery did not take place, however, and a telegram which I received this morning showed how far the effect of the recent judgment had gone in the formation of an unofficial fear-inspired and irresponsible censorship.

In the course of the first leading article an inadequate attempt to describe the first National Government had crystallised in the words: "a Government which, in the course of that brief nightmare which was its life, had borrowed more recklessly than ever an English Government had done, broken contractual obligations, goaded the Navy to mutiny, gone off the gold standard—and boasted about it."

The telegram read: "Propose delete 'goaded the Navy to mutiny' as dangerous: see case in papers."

Consequently, as time did not permit of argument, the first leading article of a new paper (and an extremely good leading article, as I who wrote it can testify) must appear disfigured with a gap enclosing "Censored by printer" in its midst.

No doubt, if there had been time, I could have convinced the printing company that the unbiased description of an historical fact could not be construed into an incitement to mutiny even by Mr. Winston Churchill. I might have urged that these words had been read by the proctorial authorities, and that it was at least highly improbable that the weight of Oxford University would be brought to bear in the support of sedition.

But in the circumstances the censorship was as effective as if it had been exercised from an office in Whitehall.

I do not imagine that circumstances exactly similar to these are likely to be of frequent occurrence. I would, however, suggest that the prosecution and the harsh punishment of the unfortunate printer of the *Daily Worker* may induce a frame of mind in the printing trade in general indistinguishable from an official censorship, except for its tendency to be far more stringent than one hopes English public opinion would allow any legal censorship to become.—Yours, etc.,

Christ Church, Oxford. HENRY SMITH, Editor, *Plan*.

THE ITALIAN DEPORTEES

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—With reference to a letter on "Italian Deportees" in your issue of November 28th, will you allow me to explain very briefly why Italians cannot appreciate the point of view of those who condemn the system of the Confino even on ethical grounds?

I hope you will agree that, socially speaking, it may be wiser, and much less cruel or vindictive, to send a man to live on a salubrious Mediterranean island in comparative freedom than to shut him up for months or years in a penitentiary, under a sentence of hard labour. It was only a few days ago that the editor of a Communist newspaper in London was so convicted for a purely political offence, and I feel that everyone must endorse every word you wrote in the same issue of November 28th as to the rigour and danger of that sentence.

But, it seems to me, there is no comparison between the punishment meted out to the editor of the *Daily Worker* and a sentence of deportation. The latter is not a punishment, it is rather a measure of social prophylactics devised in order to segregate a political offender without inflicting bodily hardship on him, and sparing him as much as possible the moral degradation of prison life.

The fact that wives and children follow their husbands and fathers to the islands should prove definitely that life there is more than tolerable, for no decent man would allow his family to share with him such atrocious sufferings as those that have been described by anti-Fascist propaganda.

As to the financial hardships to which the letter on "Italian Deportees" also refers, nothing is known of a reduction of the allowances except what has been published by the anti-Fascist sheets printed in Paris and Brussels—a not too reliable source of information. But even if the allowances have been reduced, as alleged, it should be realised that five lire daily go a long way on a lonely island in the Mediterranean, and that the local authorities exert a severe check on prices, causing them to harmonise with the average income of the inhabitants. As a matter of fact, many of the deportees are men of substance who do not need the allowance at all, but this is, of course, beside the point.

As to gifts, parcels, etc., I am able to assure you that they are not forbidden. On the contrary, the deportees are free to supplement their larders and wardrobes at will if their relatives and friends choose to help them in this manner. What is strictly (and very rightly) forbidden is the sending of parcels or money from well-meaning but, as I believe, misled sympathisers abroad, as this would tend to establish a sort of *prima facie* case for the

arbitrary thesis that the Confinati are the victims of a barbarous system of starvation and want, whereas the system of the Confino which was inherited by Fascism from the Liberal regime), was conceived as, and is, in fact, a humane alternative to imprisonment, hard labour or penal servitude.—Yours, etc.,

20 Regent's Park Terrace, Gloucester Gate. CARLO CAMAGNA.

THE CAUSATION OF CANCER

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I have read Mr. Ellis Barker's letter in your last issue upon the causation of cancer, and find many who do not agree with his baseless generalisations. Dr. Gye has just produced a book, *The Cause of Cancer*, in which he sets forth evidence which indicates that cancer is a reaction to an ultra-microscopic microbe which infects only when the cells are predisposed to infection, either by irritation or by specific cell-products. In the view of reliable experts he has proved his case, and it would be a great disservice to the cause of cancer research if Mr. Ellis Barker's letter prevented a wide circulation of Dr. Gye's work which establishes this thesis.

There is no evidence whatever to support the general views expressed by Mr. Ellis Barker, and he is notably wrong in stating that cancer is unknown among primitive races. The facts are that all primitive races are equally liable, but some of them die by battle or disease before reaching the cancer age.

So anxious am I that the truth in this matter may become known that I am prepared to present copies of Dr. Gye's book (costing 30s.) to six or eight readers of your august periodical who are research workers and whom you select. Let them, not me, decide.—Yours, etc.,

House of Commons. OLIVER LOCKER-LAMPSON.

WAR PSYCHOLOGY IN SOVIET RUSSIA

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—"Is the Soviet Union arming for war?" Mr. Lloyd asks, and nobody in his senses will question the sincerity of the Communists' "No." They are far too absorbed in their Plan, and in internal reconstruction generally, to be spoiling for a fight. More than that, no country, as M. Litvinov has repeatedly made plain, is prepared to go farther than Soviet Russia in the cause of disarmament.

But there is one aspect of the matter that receives less notice than it deserves. There are very few Russians who are not convinced that war in Europe in the near future is unavoidable. And war in Europe means, for the Russian of to-day, a war organised by one or more European countries against Soviet Russia.

The lesson of foreign intervention has not been lost on either the Soviet Government or the people of the Soviet Union. For some years now the Russian view has been that Europe is biding its time and waiting for a favourable opportunity to declare war on "Bolshevism," and this view has become greatly intensified since the Five Year Plan was introduced. The more successful, the Russians have been wont to say, the Plan was likely to be, the more immediate was the threat of war against Soviet Russia.

War in Europe, the Communist argues to-day, is dictated by the capitalist crisis, by the menace of planned socialist economy to international capitalism, by the cracking of the structure of bourgeois society—by the laws, in fact, of historical materialism. It is one of his deepest convictions at present; and the tenacity with which he holds it in argument, despite all reassurances (given a little dubiously, it must be confessed) of European pacifist sentiment, forms one of the strongest impressions which a foreigner takes away from the country. "Two mutually destructive economic systems cannot exist side by side in Europe." That is the formula which disposes of "bourgeois pacifist sentiment" in the world of capitalist economy.

What is happening in consequence is infinitely disconcerting to the foreign observer. Soviet Russia has developed and is still devloping a war psychology of a peculiar and alarming kind. It is not possible here to refer to all its manifestations. I will mention only (*a*) the extraordinary bellicosity of the Soviet publicist—see, for instance, an "open letter" of Gorki's addressed a few months ago to "the intelligentsia of Europe"; (*b*) the pronouncements of Voroshilov, the Chief of the Red Army, generally in the form of warnings to Europe that "a nation of 150 million free people, if attacked, must conquer"; (*c*) the appeals to the Young Communist League, which is in many ways the mainstay of Soviet enthusiasm at the present day, to "strengthen armaments."

It may be suggested that these are small things, no different from the usual run of things in most countries of Europe. They are unfortunately not small in a country obsessed by the fear that it is going to be attacked. They are not small in a country as isolated—by intensive propaganda on the one hand and by the censorship on the other—from the rest of Europe as Soviet Russia.

The danger, it seems to me—and I have no desire to play the part of scaremonger—is that the nationalist ardour of the masses of the Soviet Union may spill over in a critical hour and react on political leadership with the force of "moral mobilisation," as the Russians themselves designate their belief that war is inevitable. One's hope is that Russia's earnest and deep desire for peace will in the end prove more effective than her prognostications of war. But the danger will persist, I think, until we can convince her that neither this country nor France—the countries chiefly concerned—is prepared to join in an attack on her.

The Russians, after all, have had sufficient cause since 1920 to suspect the intentions of the rest of Europe. It is no use blinking that fact. They have their own adjustments to make in the cause of peace, but I think it is for England and France to persuade her, by whatever means lie within the power of the forthcoming Disarmament Conference—ill-omened though it is save for Mr. Henderson's chairmanship—that she has no longer the same grounds for suspicion.—Yours, etc.

25 Denman Drive, N.W.11. R. D. CHARQUES.

PHILOSOPHIES FOR ALL

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—In justice to Lord Russell, it requires to be pointed out that the review of the *Scientific Outlook*, which you published in your University Supplement, both in what it says and what it omits to say, gives a highly misleading impression of Lord Russell's book.

By far the largest and most valuable part of the book is taken up with expositions of scientific method and scientific technique. To this Mr. C. R. Henderson makes no reference whatsoever—an extraordinary omission if his review was intended to be not merely a prize essay, but an honest appreciation of the value of Lord Russell's work.

Mr. Henderson writes very harshly of Lord Russell's "confusion" and "wanton stupidity," but the criticisms with which he attempts to justify such abuse are either entirely unsupported by evidence or argument, or rest on a palpable misunderstanding of Lord Russell's views. He accuses Lord Russell of holding three contradictory philosophies at once, but gives not the slightest indication what he supposes them to be. He attacks Lord Russell for philosophical scepticism, but the views to which he objects, namely, that the Problem of Induction has not yet been solved and that the orderliness apparent in the world is imposed by ourselves, are neither philosophically untenable nor inconsistent with the success of the natural sciences. In fact, Mr. Henderson does not put forward a single argument to refute them.

Mr. Henderson's only substantial criticism is that it is impossible to be at the same time a thorough-going Behaviourist and a believer in objective values. This is probably true; but I can find no evidence in the *Scientific Outlook* of the confusion to which Mr. Henderson objects. It is entirely legitimate to believe in Behaviourism as psychology and as a method of education, without subscribing to the philosophical views of Dr. Watson and his followers. Lord Russell himself makes this point very clearly in the paper "Behaviourism and Values," published in *Sceptical Essays*, to which I advise Mr. Henderson to refer.

As for Lord Russell's pessimism, it is quite plausible to suppose that if the government of nations passes wholly into the hands of business men and practical scientists, as it well may, then art and the disinterested pursuit of knowledge are in danger of being abandoned. Mr. Henderson dislikes this prospect: but so does Lord Russell himself.—Yours, etc.,

Christ Church, Oxford. A. J. AYER.

BLESSED ARE THE BARREN

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I take very great exception to the article entitled "Blessed are the Barren," by Petronella Elphinstone, in the University Supplement of this week's issue of your paper.

I am the mother of six children all grown up and out in the world, and now, as always, the joy of my life. Petronella Elphinstone's description of the process of child-bearing is coarse and exaggerated. Women all down the ages would cry shame on a woman who could not face a few months' disfigurement and discomfort in order to perform the greatest and most important of all natural functions. A woman who would rather condemn her husband, herself, and her unborn child to a violent death is surely a fantastic creation of Petronella Elphinstone's brain.

For hundreds of years, Art has depicted the contented and serene mother and child as the symbol of purity and happiness. If women of to-day were in reality such as described in this article, surely this generation would destroy itself. Fortunately they are not, but why degrade and prostitute Literature by inventing such personalities?—Yours, etc. M. H.

[Miss Elphinstone's story was, as we remarked last week, a study of neuroticism. The state of mind depicted was not pleasant nor was it in any way typical of this or any other generation. But a literary prize must be awarded on literary merit. M. H.'s criterion would rule out not only Miss Elphinstone but also Guy de Maupassant, Dostoevsky and, indeed, a host of the acknowledged literary masters.—ED., *N. S. & N.*]

MALAYA

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—Your reviewer, who I strongly suspect has been a member of the Malayan Civil Service, has largely failed to understand M. Fauconnier's work or he would not make the grotesque statement that "his planters are stupid louts and his Civil Servants tactless fools." As an old resident in Malaya for twenty-three years, I can assure him that I can almost put names to these planters and unofficials. Your reviewer has doubtless never attended a planters' meeting, but I should have thought that he would have occasionally deserted the decorous and official calm of the Lake Club at Kuala Lumpur for the uproarious merriment of the "Spotted Dog" on a Saturday morning after the meeting was over.

The average member of the Malayan Civil Service, hard-working and well-meaning as he is, cannot bear being criticised, still less laughed at, any more than his equally hard-working and well-meaning colleague in the Indian Civil Service. Your reviewer may be surprised to hear that this irritability, and lack of humour, in the conscientious bureaucrat seriously diminishes what he calls "the confidence and respect of Europeans and natives alike"—and also his own power for usefulness.

Do I not remember (before the war, it is true) the British Resident, enthroned in the very club M. Fauconnier describes, booming majestically back, "Sir, you do not compare *us* to the House of Commons," when someone had said that the British Government had far worse things said of it in Parliament than the Malayan Government had had to endure from an obstinate, unofficial Member in the Federal Council.

In fact, M. Fauconnier has seen and written of Malaya objectively, without bias or prejudice, in a detached spirit, which he, as a Frenchman, probably could not have done had he been writing of a French Protectorate, and he has succeeded in this with a vividness which surpasses the efforts of all the eminent ex-Civil Servants whom your reviewer mentions.—Yours, etc.,

16, St. Catherine's Road, DAVID FREEMAN.
Southbourne, Bournemouth.

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

To the Editor of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION.

SIR,—I am compiling a commentary on the English Dictionary, in which I observe whether certain words are falling or rising in vitality and reputation, and whether they carry at the present time any atmosphere of an historical period or of an especial class or set of people. There are many words such as *Tory* and *bloody* which in the course of the past few years have gained a new position in society. I note that some words such as *socialist* have lost the alarming quality that they once held; that others which enjoyed a position of dignity in the eighteenth century—such as *amiable*—have so fallen that their use is now resented, and they are used only in sarcasm; that certain words such as *absurd* and *awful* have become so notoriously debased by inflation of circulation that they are now generally reinforced by a superlative; that others of a romanticist complexion (*anon* and *agéd*) have suffered a sad fate, have fallen into poor company, and are used now as jokes ("My agéd bicycle"); there are in addition certain distinctively modern words, such as *arty*, *bogus*, and *hearty*, whose exact meanings I make an attempt to define. For instance, I note that the word *artistic* often carries a sneer.

I observe that some words belong to the clubs, some to the bars of inns, to Oxford, to Chelsea, to the households of retired military men, etc.

I would be grateful were any of the readers of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION able to send me quotations illustrative of the modern use of any word, or illustrative of their different use half a century ago.—Yours, etc.,

Park Hotel, Lisbon, MARCUS CHEKE.

Miscellany

A CRITIQUE OF CRITICS*

IT was a common complaint against critics, no more than a hundred years ago, that they were the sworn and open enemies of authors. Quill in hand they stood, defending the Sacred Grove of the Immortals, and no one with a death certificate of less than half a century could gain admittance. "The poet Keats lay bare to weather—the serpent stung him, and the poison-tree dropped upon this little western flower." In such circumstances anyone who brought himself to write at all took care either to offer such a tasty sop of flattery as would distract and soothe and mollify beforehand, or else to anticipate attack by tearing his own work to pieces in the preface.

New works laboured under the disadvantage of their newness—the highest merit they could hope for, in the critic's eyes, was to approximate closely to some other work whose virtue centuries approved. The critics looked for a certain patina, denouncing as forgeries all other kinds of glaze, and as fit only for the rubbish-heap work that did not pretend to polish. Pig-headed, prejudiced, unjust, they had yet a standard. They did run a measuring-rod of some kind over work submitted, and were concerned to place it in accordance with their readings. Bad critics, over-critical critics, sometimes venal critics—but still, critics. The word did not yet rot in application. It did not come to pieces in your hand.

Fifty years later the post was different, and applicants of another sort were invited to apply. No longer did the critic stand axe in fist upon a mound—rather did he sit with strainer at the tea-table, his business to warn gentlewomen against anything Radical, Unseemly, Vulgar, anything that might seek beneath the mask of literature to bring into the drawing-room a great coarse breath or stink from the raw world outside. Anything of the kind he filtered off with his "we cannot recommend," "young persons will be ill-advised to venture" . . .

Not, of course, that women were the only ones whose taste needed a critic's direction. There were literary magazines for men as well, fulfilling for Victorian gentlemen very much the function the *Times* newspaper serves for us to-day—coming out not to give us news but to reassure us that no event worthy of our interest has taken place. So the squire in his Norfolks anxious to be out among the partridges was advised that, as Mr. Tennyson was on holiday, Mr. Ruskin supervising the building of the new Keble College, and Mr. Arnold's book not yet ready for the press, there was no likelihood of literature claiming any of his attention before Christmas.

No longer the author's enemy—any more than the policeman is an enemy of the agitator he turns back from the House of Commons—the critic was still a barrier, still a dam which any author whose work did not follow strictly the accepted course must find some difficulty in getting by.

* This article won a prize in our Universities Competition.

How much more happily are we writers situated now! The critic, so recently our adversary, is now our dearest friend. He is only too anxious that we should succeed. From the eminence to which he has so determinedly climbed, he reaches out a hand to draw us up, and, as he hauls, he whispers comfortingly that he is there to help us. He knows just what it is like. He used to write books himself before he took to writing about them instead.

But the terms of friendship are too weak to describe this new relation. The tie which binds author and critic to-day is the strongest of all ties, that of middleman to primary producer. If there were no books, there would be no critics. The more books there are, the more they are advertised and bought and read, the more important and the richer grows the critic.

Hustled once into some odd corner of the second editorial page and told to get what he had to say into fifteen lines, the critic stands to-day in all his glory, recognising here "such a talent as has been vouchsafed throughout the ages only to a very few," noting there "a sympathy, a tenderness, an artistic penetration the Bard himself might envy," and "trembling," positively I have seen him "trembling," in big type across three columns "for the future of this young authoress."

A year or two ago a well-known critic—well known then, and he has not wasted his time since—said to me with every appearance of ingenuousness, "I see they are printing my comments on the covers of books nowadays in the same size type as Gould's and Arnold Bennett's." He said this in the mildly surprised tone of some old lady who has written up to the proprietors of So & So's Back-Ache Pills. All she had said was that after a single pill her flatulence had left her—and now they have gone and put it in the paper!

His name was in the same size type—and his comments, over a period of years, had made it well worth while. He had become one of the finest spotters of winners of them all. Now he spotted almost nothing else—and so, in the odd way things happen, his salary had gone up with the advertising and he had been asked to write criticisms for an illustrated weekly.

Dislike authors? Why, I have heard of his having asked them out to lunch!

From enemies to friends, antagonists to partners—but no description is complete that does not include that of allies in sacrilege and murder.

So many literary geniuses are now forthcoming (the hosts of Midian—prowlers no longer—march sixteen deep every Sunday morning to take their seats upon Parnassus, bearing the most authentic signed admission tickets) that it has long been a cause of worry among critics how to find admission for them all. Pathetically they cry that the word genius has perhaps on past occasions been somewhat loosely used, but really they don't see how they can withhold it from this clever novel about country life, that fine red-blooded book of sea-adventures, or the other whimsical little volume of letters from an old lady and her tabby-cat.

Fortunately, at this crisis, there is the example of the motor manufacturers. When everyone in the country has a car, the manufacturers do not retire. They simply make more motors and induce the public to throw away the old. That, they say, was our *last* year's model.

To cut down high-grade literary production, to spot fewer men and women of genius each week, is to reduce the critic's own position. As the benches become fuller, we must turn out the last year's models.

They are turned out slowly for the most part, gradual eviction, a word here and there, but sometimes in moments of panic, action becomes violent. It is only a year or two since the *Evening Standard*—to whom, with the *Sunday Times*, the *Observer*, and the *Times Literary Supplement*, so much of the improved condition of an author's life is due—led a combined assault of famous critics on the masters of the past. Marryat, they decided, was a dunce. George Eliot had shown herself unreadable. "Scott," declared one, "I put him there!"—and he beat on the carpet with his fist. Fielding was stupid—the true river of literature flowing, they agreed, not perhaps through the Wells of Loneliness (the public are hardly ready for that yet) but certainly through the waters troubled by Mr. Wilder's angel.

And why, they were demanding only a week or two ago, should anyone trouble to read Mrs. Gaskell, when there's that other charming thing about the Brontës—you know, their going to Woolworth's, and all that!

Education, compulsory, universal education, making everyone free of books, letting them think that all you have to do with a book is to read it—and then only if it's new! Tinker, tailor, soldier, sailor, typists, business men even, and politicians, now pronounce on books with every expectation that you will listen to what they have to say. They *know*, these people. They can read. They can see it for themselves. No longer are there magazines and quarterlies run to keep intruders out of Sacred Groves. The great modern newspaper is the servant of its readers, the critic is a part of the newspaper. His business is to recommend. Clearly he must recommend people what they like—not what they may learn one day to appreciate. If he doesn't they soon will let him know. So the new industry of literature has grown up. "Author" and "Critic"—the words are dead. Why should we cut each other's throats? In union is strength. As "Recommender" and "Recommended" we can build up a business that will give employment to ourselves and spiritual satisfaction to a nation.

But remember, goods of all kinds, whether ostrich feathers, incandescent gas mantles or "period" chairs, are liable to sudden, unexpected falls and rises in popularity. The business man, the bank-clerk and politician, has no interest in literature as literature—if he had he would read Dryden, Swift, Miss Austen. Books are in fashion now, just as painting is not. But painting or music may come in. The newspapers may discover nature, health, or the secret of longevity. Trade may improve, and business men engage as heretofore in business.

When that happens, the Book Industry—for all even the Book Society can do—will die, and the critics will die with it.

And in that day writers, living in odd corners, practising their trade, will feel as though their beloved had recovered from an odious and disfiguring disease, and their hearts will leap with joy, and they will begin to play the game of putting one word before another with twice the diligence they used before.

H. T. HOPKINSON.

THE MOSCOW ARTS THEATRE

THE Russian actors who are to be seen at the Kingsway Theatre belong to the Prague Group of the Moscow Arts Theatre. What this implies I do not know, but this much is certain, and nothing else is of much importance, they are a most accomplished company. Their performances are directed by M. Pavloff, himself an extraordinarily finished actor. Their programme for the second week included *Crime and Punishment*, *The White Guards*, *An Evening of Tchehov* (four short comedies), *The Quadrature of the Circle*, *The Government Inspector* and *Marriage*, another play by Gogol. Gogol's *The Government Inspector* has been twice performed in English. It is one of the most delightful and spirited farces in nineteenth century drama and, judging from notices, their performance was a tremendous success. At the time of writing this notice I have only seen one of their performances, namely *The White Guards*. But from that play, although tragi-comedy and not a farce, I can tell that to have seen them act *The Government Inspector* must have been a rare treat. With the exception of the Yiddish Players I have never had my attention more continually held by a play in a language

I did not understand. The expressiveness of their gestures and intonations kept me from being bored for a single moment. Of course one perpetually curses one's misfortune at being unable to follow words which one is convinced are being perfectly delivered, but it is extraordinary with what interest one can be made to follow every turn and twist of an unintelligible dialogue. One could guess at the kind of jokes that they were making, and every subtle turn of sentiment in the love scenes.

The White Guards is a play by M. Boulgakoff, a young Russian dramatist whose name was made by this play in Moscow in 1928. It ran for nearly a year. At the end of 325 performances it was stopped by the Soviet Censorship. That it was allowed to run so long makes one think that the Soviet Censorship is not always so rigorous as other incidents have suggested, for the play is sympathetic to the old order. All the characters are amiable except one, who first of all deserts to the German Army when it is leaving the Ukraine, and when the Bolshevik Army defeats the Peasant Army which had already defeated the White Guards, this man goes over to the Bolsheviks. All the others are passionately devoted to the old order, and the most pervasive sentiment throughout is that of defeated loyalty. Most of the action takes place in the house of a Colonel Tourbine, late of the Imperial Russian Army (the date is December, 1918), who thinks it his duty to support the Hetman of the Ukraine, appointed by the Germans, against the Ukrainian revolutionaries. To him the Hetman is a traitor to Russia; nevertheless, his loyalty to the old order over-rules that consideration in his mind and in that of his younger brother. The Germans withdraw, smuggling out of the country the Hetman himself disguised as a wounded German soldier, and the White Guards are left at the mercy of the revolutionaries in Kiev. The Colonel when he hears of the Hetman's flight disbands his troops to save bloodshed, but refuses to survive himself, and falls attacking the peasants. The curtain falls a few weeks later on a tableau of his few surviving officers listening to the tramp and music of the advancing Bolshevik Army, petrified by the approach of inexorable defeat.

Such is the outline of a play which the Soviet Government tolerated for a year, perhaps because it was chequered with so much humour and good-nature. There are scenes of admirable happy-go-lucky gaiety and vivacity which throw anxiety and strain into greater relief. It is rash to say of any play in an incomprehensible language that it was perfectly acted, but in this case it was impossible to doubt it. The intelligibility of every gesture and change of expression, not only in the case of M. Pavloff, who is a marvellous actor, but of the whole cast, convinced one. The delicately rhythmic singing of M. Bogdanoff in the part of Nicholas Tourbine, the Colonel's younger brother, is most moving, and his quiet demeanour conveys intensity of emotion as perfectly as the glorious exuberance of M. Pavloff in the comic part of Captain Myshlayevsky. There is only one woman's part in the play, that of Tourbine's sister, played by Mlle. V. Gretch, and in her case, too, every shade of emotion was perceptible. Next week will be performed, besides some of Tchehov's short plays, *Crime and Punishment*, *The White Guards* and *The Government Inspector*. They should be seen by lovers of acting.

DESMOND MACCARTHY.

HOMECOMING*

THE hall sulks dark and cool; the heat outside
withdrawn like tropic rain and all the wide
stretch of the gravel bird-like whipped from sight,
still pearl-grey in its patience while that light
gasps all around it. Here in this smooth tomb
a swimming green invades us, then the room
drops into its raw strangeness and our eyes
savour its difference with a frail surprise.
Nothing seems transient here. Only the thick
stir of the clock's apologetic tick
twisting through all this stillness as a blade
sinking through sea to unremitting shade
tells us that time is passing. Still I stand,
fingers along oak lintel, seeing your hand
twitch up to nut-brown hat rack and your legs,
most monstrously distorted, trousered pegs
mirrored in sepia, cross the parquet floor,
reaching the telephone by the dummy door,
grabbing the pad and tearing off the page. . . .
So strange to watch it thus; as if an age
to lift two fingers—two to rip the sheet;
our actions in slow motion. See, my feet
press forward 'gainst the sea-thrust. Strange that this
fancy should linger yet. Wood meets the kiss
of leather with a faint shy rhythmic ease;
wood with veneer so deep to mention trees
had caused patrician shudders lest the name,
ever so thinly faltered, should hide blame;
wood so respectable the vile secret
of bourgeois origin was hurting yet.
The stairs beneath me, carven banister—
impersonal in pride of things that were,
retainer-like in virtue of their fee—
guide my ascent with dumb servility.
Unchanging home . . .
. . . a new resentful glow
angers the stained glass of the stair window,
lacing the surface of this tideless sea
where blue wool mats are islands. . . . Suddenly
beauty is withered grass and there's no grace
in all this show. It only seems a face
perfect of lineament with vacant eyes,
hiding its lack of soul in lovely guise.
Clearly I see his inarticulate hands . . .
. . . stiff cuticle . . . the nails square-cut. . . . He stands
there by the armoured suit, his back this way.
I know him all so well and what he'll say
at dinner and at bedtime . . . what he'll do . . .
and then I slowly think, "I once loved you."

K. ALLOTT.

Mr. H. Allott is a prizewinner in our Universities Competition.

BALLET AND ORATORIO

THE admirers of the Diaghilev Ballet were innumerable and of all types. Perhaps no artistic institution within the last twenty-five years has provoked such passionate interest or was responsible for more fresh and original work. With the death of Diaghilev there was an end to this work, but such an artistic effort as his could not fail to inspire a following, and in England, at least, the founding of the Camargo Society under the inspiration of one of the most famous of Diaghilev's company, Lydia Lopokova, was a sign that the great revival of ballet which started in Russia at the end of the nineteenth century was not to be extinguished.

The Camargo Society has three avowed aims: (1) To produce original and classic ballets at a London theatre four times a year on Sunday evenings and Monday afternoons; (2) to obtain the collaboration of living composers, painters and choreographers; and (3) to engage the best dancers, English and foreign, for their performance. The Society has been in existence some years, and has already a number of notable original productions—such, for example, as Vaughan Williams's ballet *Job*—to its credit. All those who are interested in the art of the ballet ought to join the Society (particulars of membership may be obtained from the Secretary, 5/42, Campden House Court, W.8) and so help to further the development of ballet in this country. The Camargo Society does not represent a narrow clique in the art of ballet. It works in friendly contact with such admirable groups as the Marie Rambert Ballet, the

Vic-Wells Ballet and such dancers as Phyllis Bedells and Ninette de Valois, and can call upon all the resources that we have to offer in this country in the way of musical, scenographic, and choreographic talent. But it can only hope to make any considerable sustained achievement if it has a good measure of public support.

On Sunday and Monday last the Camargo Society produced at the Savoy Theatre four ballets. The first was *A Woman's Privilege*, in three scenes, the music by Handel, selected and orchestrated by Sir Thomas Beecham, who conducted; the choreography by Trudl Dubsky; and the setting by Edna Ginesi. On the whole, I thought the music was the best part of this ballet, and Sir Thomas Beecham conducted with his usual verve and musicianship. Trudl Dubsky, who took the principal dancing part of the bride, has personality and a gift for miming, and the scene with the flags was charming; otherwise, I thought this ballet a little ineffective.

In *Fête Polonaise* Phyllis Bedells, who is a very neat dancer with a good rhythm, took the principal part. The choreography by Ninette de Valois was well arranged on classical lines, but I did not care very much for Mr. Owen P. Smyth's costumes, which I thought undistinguished. The music by Glinka, on the other hand, was delightful and it could not have been conducted with more spirit and precision than Mr. Constant Lambert secured. In "Chopin's Ballade in A flat," orchestrated by Arnold Bax, produced by Phyllis Bedells, the dancing and the music were again superior to the costumes, which were of a nondescript blue that simply did not show up with any effect at all against the dark background.

The most effective ballet was the *Rio Grande*, a setting of Sacheverell Sitwell's poem for chorus, orchestra and solo pianoforte, produced as a ballet entitled *A Day in a Southern Port* by Frederick Ashton, with scenery and costumes by Edward Burra. Here the choreography was skilful and amusing and the immense talent of Lydia Lopokova as a dancer showed itself immediately in the quality of her performance as the Queen of the Port. She was also ably assisted by Alicia Markova, Walter Gore, and William Chappell, and the dancing was the most alive and stimulating of the afternoon. The scenery and costumes by Burra, though rather eclectically modern than original, were effective and entertaining, whilst Mr. Constant Lambert conducted his own now well-known music with all the buoyancy and vitality we have learned to expect from him as a conductor.

It is possible that Mr. William Walton, whose *Belshazzar's Feast* was performed for the first time in London on November 25th, would find the ballet a form more suited to his talents than oratorio. At all events, I hope he will make an attempt to follow up his setting of Edith Sitwell's *Façade* with more work of this kind, which I, personally, have found more enjoyable than *Belshazzar's Feast*. Mr. Walton's *Façade* and his Viola Concerto gave us a high opinion of his ability, and although *Belshazzar's Feast* also shows great ability it does not, to my mind, reveal the progress that I had hoped for and had been led to expect. It is a very ambitious choral work and to a musician it offers many points of interest, but what I find chiefly lacking is a fundamental inspiration. I thought at the opening words: "Thus spake Isaiah, 'Thy sons that thou shalt beget they shall be taken away . . .'" that it began well: but my first disappointment was the uninspired, unmoving setting of the words "By the waters of Babylon," in which the musical material and the handling were both conventional. Now if a composer cannot succeed here there is something vital lacking in him—so it seems to me. But the succeeding unaccompanied baritone recitative increased my doubt. Here, again, was skill rather than impulse. However, I do not find this lack of impulse in the descriptive recitatives important, especially as the skill is uncommonly good. But when we got to the choruses "Praise ye the God of Gold" and all the other gods from silver to brass, it really was about time for something to happen. Here, at least, a thrill of some sort was needed, but these choruses were inexplicably flat and I do not believe (which in a first performance, however, must be admitted as a possibility) that their flatness was due to inadequacy in performance. I believe these choruses are intrinsically flat for lack of musical dramatic imagination in their writing. There was some interesting harmony at the words "Thou, O King, art King of Kings: O King, live for ever" and from this point during the succeeding section the music was more vital, there being some effective and interesting touches in the orchestration particularly. The Finale, I thought, did not come off at all, but this may have been due to the performance by the National Chorus and the B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra under Dr. Adrian Boult, for I am told that it was more effective at Leeds.

What surprised me was the conventionality of the musical treatment as a whole. But perhaps, on reflection, this is not surprising in the first work of a young composer in a form of oratorio which he is essaying for the first time. We have had in England during the last hundred years a plethora of choral works and they take some living down. People's memories are very short and already such huge choral works as Granville Bantock's *Omar Khayyam* seem to be forgotten. I should be very surprised if anyone claimed that *Belshazzar's Feast* is a real advance on *Omar Khayyam*. But there is nothing more difficult to compose than choral works, and so Mr. Walton must have been abundantly encouraged by the enthusiastic reception of his work. He will, I hope, very quickly surpass it, for he is one of the young English composers to whom we look for truly creative work in music.

W. J. TURNER.

Things to see and hear in the coming week:

Saturday, December 5th—
- Robert Mayer Concert for Children, Central Hall, Westminster, 11.
- Orloff, Chopin Recital, Wigmore Hall, 3.
- Rubinstein, Piano Recital, Grotrian Hall, 3.15.

Sunday, December 6th—
- John A. Hobson on "The Recording Angel," Conway Hall, 11.
- Richard Tauber, Albert Hall, 3.
- Concert of Chamber Music, Conway Hall, 6.30.
- "The Children's Tragedy," by Karl Schönherr, Phoenix Theatre.
- "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie," Arts Theatre.
- "Traveller in the Dark," Savoy Theatre.

Monday, December 7th—
- London Symphony Orchestra, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
- "New Homes for Old," Exhibition Organised by London Housing Societies, Central Hall, Westminster.

Tuesday, December 8th—
- Rugby Football, Oxford *v.* Cambridge, Twickenham.
- Dr. Percy Dearmer on "Flamboyant and Perpendicular Architecture," King's College, 5.30.
- Clough Williams-Ellis on "Bolshevik Buildings," Royal Society of Arts, 8.15.
- Harold Samuel, Bach Concert, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.
- "Can the Leopard?" Haymarket Theatre.
- Bach's Mass in B Minor, St. Margaret's Church, Westminster, 8.

Wednesday, December 9th—
- B.B.C. Symphony Concert, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

Thursday, December 10th—
- C. H. Driver on "Walter Bagehot and the Social Psychologists," Kings College, 5.15.
- S. P. Turin on "Russian Exports and Imports," 16, Russell Square, 6.

Friday, December 11th—
- "The Spanish Tragedie," by Thomas Kyd, Birkbeck College, 7.30.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

I HAVE never understood the advice, "Give Books at Christmas!" What else would one give, or hope to receive? There are, of course, the "useful" presents. As a child I resented bitterly the efforts made by a few moderately remote relations to give me gloves, ties or neckerchiefs as Christmas presents; and soon contrived to train them to learn that they must consult my parents before these annual exercises, and my parents, properly coached, could be relied on to choose the right books. One's grievance as a child was, of course, that there was something shameful in receiving as a festive gift what would otherwise arrive to one as a consequence of that careful supervision exercised on children by their connected adults. Now that I am older I admit the right of near relatives or dear friends (grieved by one's habitual air of self-satisfied shabbiness) to repair one's wardrobe, secret or proclaimed. As soon as the purchase of shirts and socks is a matter of one's own pocket, no one objects to friendly supplementaries. Still I can but rarely regard these as Christmas presents proper, and prefer indeed to receive them out of season. For Christmas and, when the precious custom still lingers, for New Year, Epiphany, Candlemas, Easter, May day, Ascensiontide, and the birthday of Oliver Goldsmith, one's self or any other famous man, the right present is a book or a library. The present depression—I understand that the depression still exists officially even although the *Times* newspaper insists that the fall in the pound's value has "no important significance"—the present depression needs no defence from me; it receives that aid in other quarters. If, however, the rumour is true and the depression is responsible for a rush to the bookshops for presents, I cannot refrain from a cheer at so much gained out of the wreck.

* * *

Is there any shop so enticing as a book-shop? Is there any other shop where there is so great a variety of articles, all preserving a certain family character, and all so different? One family characteristic that nearly all good books possess is that they are, comparatively, cheap. On this matter there is a great deal of vulgar error. When we calculate the expense of other purchasable articles, we compare the cost of, say, cut flowers with the cost of a cab-fare, or a box of cigarettes or a drink at a bar or even the more luxurious attractions of a barber. With books most men's minds work differently. The cost of a book appears to them to be absolute. They do not balance it against the cost of a theatre-ticket or a pair of spats; they compare it with a complete absence of expenditure. Looking soberly at the moderate prices in a publisher's catalogue, they calculate that, if they buy, say, *Shakespeare and all that Crush* (Blackwell, 3s. 6d.), where Mr. Thomas Derrick's designs more than atone for a text that recalls the prose of Gilbert A'Beckett, they are simply three shillings and sixpence down. So a man argues and then goes to his favourite restaurant and by the time he has paid for his grilled sole, glass of sherry, bit of cheese, half-bottle of wine, biscuits and coffee, is down nearly ten shillings, but is quite free from the sensation of mere squandering that would overcome him, almost to coma, if he had spent half-a-guinea on a book. I suppose the origin of this strange mental process is to be sought in that useful, but dangerous institution, the lending library. People have got out of the way of thinking of books as purchasable; they place them among the borrowable things. It is a hard state of mind to understand. I borrow only things that have no value. I detest lending books, except to those who really cannot afford to buy them; and if I really like a book I wish to have my own copy.

A great many of the most beautiful books cannot be borrowed. At least I do not think any library could be found to "circulate" the lovely Nonesuch *Odyssey* (Nonesuch Press, £3 17s. 6d.), Beckford's *Thoughts upon Hunting* (Davies, 15s.), Clare Leighton's splendid edition of *Wuthering Heights* (Duckworth, 25s.) or even Walter de la Mare's *Seven Stories* (Faber and Faber, 15s.) with the distinctively queer illustrations by Mr. John Nash. Books of this kind are at least as well worth buying as pictures or engravings; and they have the advantage of being much easier to house. The extraordinary cheapness of the fine books produced by Mr. Francis Meynell must not be allowed to make us think that other books, apparently more expensive in proportion, are not really cheap. Of the Nonesuch *Odyssey* over thirteen hundred copies have been printed; hence it can be offered at a price so low that only examination could convince an inquirer of its value. Mr. Maynard and Mr. Bray at The Raven Press are the newest representatives of what we can now call the old Private Press tradition. Only two hundred and seventy-five copies of each book are printed; and so the prices will seem rather high to those who do not realise how increased production can enable a publisher to lower a book's price. Yet there are few cheaper Christmas presents this year than the Raven editions of *Samson Agonistes* (£2 10s.), *Venus and Adonis* (£1 15s.) and *The Book of Tobit* (£2 5s.). *Tobit* and *Venus and Adonis* are illustrated by Mr. Bray with entrancing wood-engravings; while Milton's drama has rarely found a better interpreter than Mr. Maynard.

* * *

There are no doubt people to whom one cannot give books — for them there is Stilton, old port, or other gifts of comestibles. Once I lived in a constituency where our local member of Parliament always sent us reindeer-tongues and Stilton, an action which altered my whole opinion of the House of Commons. If, however, you want to give a book, and really do not know what book to give —are there not book-shops open? Are there not advertisements? Are there not reviews, appreciations, criticisms, or abusive articles? Are there not, too, if I may whisper it, the catalogues of secondhand booksellers and catalogues of that sad tribe, the books that have been remaindered? I would not suggest that you should gain credit for presenting a three-guinea book, when actually you have paid only fifteen shillings for it, though doubtless the thing has often been done; but the man whose purse is limited, and who has been constrained from buying more than few books, is often gladdened when Mr. Grant, of Edinburgh, or Mr. Glaisher, of Holborn, sends out those fat lists which not seldom contain some of the collectors' pieces of the future. Unconsciously I have slipped in the last few sentences into the best possible defence of book-giving. Can there be any question that it is best for a man to give as presents the things he values and would like to keep? And I notice that in these very discursive remarks on book-giving I have come back to every book-collector's goal, the giving of books to oneself. Is there any purer form of selfishness? To give wine to oneself, or food; to buy, as it was fabled did the gilded youth of the nineties, three theatre stalls—one for the person, one for the hat, one for the cane and gloves —these seem but a lower form of self-indulgence. Nor is any of them, except possibly the last sport, an indulgence which one can enjoy without company. No man can drink wine by himself, except for the mere quenching of thirst. How pleasant to read alone! How delightful, as time grows more and more ominous with tasks undone, and the air heavy with neglected duties, to sink into the arm-chair beside a fire that will require no attention (or at least no attention of yours) for the next five hours, to cut the string of parcel after parcel, to open the pages of books that contain in them so much of joy and of expectation; books that one will read straightway, books that one will dip into, and those fascinating volumes, the books from which one can, by a continual postponement of reading them, obtain a continual delight.

RICHARD SUNNE.

NEW NOVELS

The Mango Tree. By MARGARET HAMILTON. Cobden Sanderson. 6s.

Destination. By LEONID BELY. Chapman and Hall. 7s. 6d.

The Perfume of Amber. By H. VIVIAN HAMILTON. Blackwood. 7s. 6d.

Without My Cloak. By KATE O'BRIEN. Heinemann. 8s. 6d.

These books are sufficiently forceful, all of them, to make a new person of you. They take you as so much raw material and make you again a little differently. Say goodbye to yourself. After reading the four of them you could wander round as you might at a portrait gallery and examine the four new people you are. And in one of them you will find the devotee of a book of childish impressions, *The Mango Tree*. Childhood here has an exotic African setting of heat and storm and beasts and birds and flowers, but, more than that, the child is an exotic too. Compared to the commoner outfit of childhood, this child had a mango-tree of a mind, and a monkey's antics, and a snake's stealthiness, and a bird's voice. Her father was an English soldier in sub-tropical Africa; her young mother relied chiefly on the back of her hair-brush for the disciplining of the solitary daughter. The daughter lived largely in trees, but with an odd mingling of wildness and conformity must descend to meet the hair-brush that so frequently "contrived a double debt to pay," and to attend Sunday-school and church. Several of the sections of this short book begin: "I sat in our pew," and by the time one has become used to these opening words the Sunday-after-Sunday long-suffering of an untamable child has been fully conveyed. One must excuse the book's unawareness of extreme provocation to parents: this is the child's show, and it has an exquisite solidarity. Importance, suspense, drama are not the less for the mature reader for belonging to the child's world—in which the solid flesh of a sweet, motherly, tree-top Mrs. Brooks is created out of the child's need and fancy, and where not human beings but only animals like Lugs the rabbit, can approach the reality of creatures of fancy.

> I sat in our pew, quite motionless for once, with my eyes fixed on my mother. It was one of those particularly hot days when I might have hoped to be allowed to stay at home; but my expectations had been disappointed. I had wanted to stay and protect Lugs. Complaints had thickened about his doings in the kitchen garden. It seemed to me impossible that such a large kitchen garden could not feed Lugs as well as ourselves. I had a premonition about Lugs; and I sat spotless and impeccable, but with my eyes set on my mother's brow, while I slowly gathered one of those accurate impressions of what was going on in another's mind, such as often were to come to me. . . . Home again, I must eat my lunch before I could be free to disappear in the garden. I ate but little, always with my eyes on my mother's brow. Finally I sat transfixed; my mind had become a blank; I was aware of nothing around me—only of what I saw in my mother's mind. I knew that at that moment she herself did not know whether Lugs was dead; but I knew it was she who had told the servants to get rid of him. Presently I went out and began my search for Lugs. . . . The servants had gone for their Sunday *furgash*—their outing. Only one, on duty in the house, remained behind. I searched throughout their quarters, unobserved. There was no Lugs. Then I came upon the chopping-block. There was nothing on the chopping-block but one small eye. It was Lugs's eye.

But Lugs on the chopping-block is but a faint brief image of a wild child laid out alive on civilisation.

Destination is a book you will wish to resist. One story of school-boy life must probably be taken as a rule with another to strike an average of opinion. This particular book would need a hundred extolling records to counterbalance it; such other evidence, moreover, would have to bear the same stamp of honesty. For much weakness in artistry does not destroy the impressiveness of this account. The schoolboys, but for one, are blurred and portrayed in a sketchy fashion (it is to be hoped that these blurs represent the spaces into which those hundred other pleasant impressions could fit themselves). Also, the author has thought to relieve the plotless record by excursions into the lives of masters and parents, which are so brief and arbitrary as to have no use in themselves nor in their bearing on the boys' existences, and which, therefore, seem ludicrously inept. But, when that is said, there is very little to be hoped for from this writer's inefficiency, and much to be suffered from his power. His power is in giving an authentic sound to the most unredeemed and depraved picture of a public school that has yet been written—no, not a school, but a zoo, containing in masters and boys the grossest specimens of life. It may be episodic and incomplete portrayal, but in its effect on the prosaic and decent George Thompson, the boy who is most described, the picture attains its thoroughness. As much as is here has an actual impression. After all, one sees the inhabitants of the Regent's Park Zoo only in glimpses—but one believes what one sees; one is compelled to do so.

Mr. Hamilton has written a very original and entertaining book. His University of Phoquesville, which he declares to be in Kent, is not perhaps so far away as Mars, but these delightfully absurd professional circles are certainly not of this earth. Remembering his Sheridan, Mr. Hamilton introduces the admirable Professor Kindness, whom the detestable Mrs. Ditchwater intrigues to calumniate; and proceeds to lavish on Phoquesville such dukes and duchesses and scents and silks and satins and food and conversation as would astonish any little town. Everything is a little unreal, but not entirely so. One does not know why Mr. Hamilton's quite remarkably versatile invention—not to mention his erudition—should have gone in this direction more than another. Or perhaps the real puzzle is not so much why he should have written this particular four hundred close pages of arbitrary intelligent exuberance as why the end comes at all. What overwhelming representations, what bribes and deputations, can have induced him to stop? Not restrained by fidelity to fact, nor disciplined by any carefully shaped fantasy, Mr. Hamilton, like an Indian mystic practising levitation, has lifted himself just a little way off the earth, and is not bound by the laws of anywhere. He has migrated to a tax-free state, where he lives in great profusion. What is remarkable about his performance is that he knows his own mood so well as to maintain throughout the same degree of delightful unreality. He remains all the time at the same slight distance from the ground.

Without My Cloak succeeds in snatching you out of your own existence by the lively interest it induces you to take in its family of Considines. It is not a profound book; it spreads itself in other directions; it could better describe a few miles of landscape than one tree, and it finds it much easier to bring six children into the world than one. The Considines have big families and fortunes; it is a world of *largesse*, and this record spreads its wide net over all. It hits off Caroline's loveless marriage and proceeds to Anthony's endlessly amorous one. It describes resourcefully the panorama of these lives, with the right word for the beauty of women, and the soft brilliance of parties, and the period and style of a house. But it does not see to the bottom of everything it names; it may speak of religion, and make men priests, but it might truly be said to have never heard of it. Still, reading about the Considines you will forget your own name.

VIOLA MEYNELL.

THE LAND OF EXILES

In Bolshevik Siberia. By MALCOLM BURR. Witherby. 10s. 6d.

Let me begin by a personal note on the author. During the winter 1915–1916, I had the good luck to know him upon the Lembat road some five miles north-east from Salonika. Being a Turkish road, it was impossible to move along it, and as it was essential for carrying our supplies to our outposts towards the Bulgarian frontier, a lot of labour was needed to make it practicable. By the offer of a British loaf, sugar, olives, coffee, a share of a tent, and a few pence a day, the Sappers easily collected a swarm of 3,000 labourers representing all the Balkan peoples—Serbs, Albanians, Bulgars, Greeks, and some Armenians thrown in, all practising a babel of internecine hatred, but practising nothing else. By one of the inspirations that save the British nation in extremes, someone thought of Captain Malcolm Burr, an Oxford entomologist, who was hanging about Salonika and had long been familiar with the Balkans, owing to his persistent researches into insect life. He had in fact, discovered 500 undescribed species of earwig, making 800 in all, though one might have been considered enough; and in the course of his investigations he had learned to distinguish each of the Balkan races at sight, and could address each in their own tongue.

Indeed, I have never known such a linguist, and when appointed to command the Labour Camp he rapidly reduced the chaos of natives to the order of insects arranged in a museum. Twice at least when I was staying in his camp a violent riot arose. Bulgar Exarchists rushed upon Greek and Serbian Patriarchists, Catholics upon Orthodox, with all the fury of an Early Christian Council, and the Moslems breathed out slaughter indifferently, all striving to conceal their picks and shovels in their tents, ready for nocturnal murder. But Captain Burr went up and down among the surging assassins, addressing each religion in its own tongue, and gradually allaying doctrinal rage. It required all an entomologist's knowledge of Nature to establish peace, but he did it.

The memory of those lively days gives me a special interest in the author's present book. It tells of his sojourn for many months in a little-known part of northern Siberia, where he went in the service of the Lena goldmines. As in the Balkans, he became familiar with strange races and religions—Buddhist Buriats, Shamanist Yakuts (pagan at heart), ancient tribes of Yukagins and Lamuts, Tungas and Ossets, who sprang from the Caucasus. Most of these races now speak some kind of Russian, which, of course, the author knew well, but he also learned enough Yakut to astonish the tribe. In several places he detected signs of a more refined and intellectual type, the progeny of those thousands of exiles banished to Siberia because their political opinions did not agree with the Tsar's. He estimates the population around the gold-mining district at about 20,000, but as the gold is gradually worked out most of it will disappear.

Through the wide forest or desert land of Siberia called the Taiga, the only three roads are the railway and the two long rivers, the Yenesei and the Lena, down which Mr. Burr floated for about 1,000 miles from Irkutsk, though he had to drive back with horse-sledges. As one goes north the forest ceases, and one passes through vast areas of rock scraped bare by ancient glaciers or through frozen marshes where the ivory, skeletons, and even flesh of prehistoric mammoths are found embedded in bogs into which the monsters sank thousands of years ago. There is little animal life, but bears, sables, and a few other creatures are killed for their furs. Yaks are common, elks rare, and so is the maral, whose horns are valued by the Chinese, who boil them down into a drug which seems to have the vivifying property attributed to monkey glands. But for the lichen on which the reindeer live, finding it under the snow, the land would be uninhabited, for without reindeer the natives could not exist. As became a distinguished naturalist, the author kept a keen watch for birds as well as animals, and many are mentioned, wax-wings and bullfinches being fairly common, rather unexpectedly one would think.

Winter lasts for seven months, and the cold is severe, though not much worse than one knows it in Canada. The tributary river Bodaibo, where the author chiefly lived, is too rapid to freeze, but in the intense cold columns of steam rise constantly from its surface like spray from the Victoria Falls. One grows accustomed to the rigorous life. No one catches cold. Chilblains are unknown, and, except for imported children, existence is fairly healthy, food of yak-beef sweetened with berries is plentiful, soup is kept frozen as blocks of ice, and there is no risk of any food "going bad." The Russian descendants of exiles, the officials of the mines, and the doctors read a good deal, especially translations from the English, and there are occasional outbursts of gaiety, much stimulated by vodka. Two instances of local custom out of many I may mention. As tumblers are scarce and much needed, three men take a bottle; one holds it securely, the second pulls his belt rapidly to and fro round it till the friction makes it hot; at the word "Now!" the third pours cold water over the heated place and the bottle snaps, leaving the lower part as a tumbler with a perfectly smooth edge. The second instance is a case of justice. A poor cobbler and his wife were brutally murdered by a Chinaman, who suspected they had hidden gold; whereupon a number of respectable Chinese in the neighbourhood hanged themselves in protest.

The whole is not exactly an alluring picture of life. It scarcely justifies the exclamation of the Russian lady who, on the Bay of Naples, remarked, "Yes, it is beautiful, but you have not seen Siberia!" None the less the book, written in a style of humorous simplicity, is of great interest, and of scientific value.

HENRY W. NEVINSON.

HE WRITES TO PLEASE.

Portraits. By DESMOND MACCARTHY. Putnam. 7s. 6d.

At the opening of the essay on Stevenson, Mr. MacCarthy writes: "I often read Stevenson. One reason why I turn to him is that he writes to give me pleasure. How few modern authors do! They write to do us good, to expose us, to scold us, to teach us, to express their own contempt for us and to exhibit their own indomitable minds; few write to entertain and delight us." The truth in this made me gloomy; and my gloom was only removed by reading other essays in this book, written by a man who has never forgotten that no positive harm will come either to artist or to client if the artist can contrive to give pleasure. There is, of course, a certain innocence in Mr. MacCarthy's differentiation of Stevenson. I am sure he is right in believing that Stevenson wished to please us; but it is surprising how many disagreeable authors expect us to be pleased at their expressions of anger, contempt, self-satisfaction and superior exhortation. It is even more surprising how many people there are who support them in their expectation, and apparently do get pleasure out of work which would seem to have no pleasurable qualities at all. Only so, by this grave acceptance of heavy-handed artists, can we explain the light esteem in which the pleasing authors are commonly held. It is notorious how we under-rate our light novelists, our writers of comedy, or of light verse. I rarely meet anyone who knows that Mr. A. P. Herbert and Mr. E. V. Knox are two of our best living poets. So more recently there has been a tendency to dispraise the essayist, especially the literary critic, who can write pleasurable prose, with whom reading does not seem to be a nauseating exercise undertaken in the mood that compels some men to turn and twist on bedroom floors, breathing in and out, while snatching glances at baffling little handbooks on physical contortions. The solemn ass is getting more than his fair share of attention in this region of literary criticism; and I hope that this first volume of Mr. MacCarthy's collected essays will do something to put matters right.

This volume is typographically delightful, and bibliographically a scandal. No doubt there is no reason why we should have our curiosity assuaged about the original homes of the essays; but we should be given the dates. There is one at least, I think, from the old *Albany*—the brilliant review of Baroness Bertouche's *Father Ignatius;* to that the date 1904 is appended. At the dates of most one can only guess, and it is rather disconcerting in a volume with the imprint 1931 to read of "Gladstone's speeches, selected by Lord Morley, and *now* reprinted": or to read "I made a howler last month;" or to find reference to a "here" which is obviously not the "here" of this handsome page. That is all my grumble, and that is perhaps ungracious, for Mr. MacCarthy shows plainly enough in his introductory letter to Desmond MacCarthy, aged 22, that there have been difficulties, even now, in getting that youth's consent to this collection. It has been made by Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith, who may presumably also be credited with the charming idea of hanging these portraits alphabetically; this arrangement produces the same pleasant result that it does on a library shelf. The eager reader finds Bunyan in engaging proximity to Oscar Browning and Richard Burton, and is lead seductively on from Sir William Harcourt, through Horace, to Ignatius and Henry

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James. It will be seen that the portrait-gallery is not wholly literary, nor does the painter keep to those he knew—indeed one of them he knew best and has discussed most illuminatingly, "Erewhon" Butler, is not here at all. The rarest of Mr. MacCarthy's gifts is perhaps his mixture of a real mastery in the essay-form and the use of sentences almost epigrammatic in their force; or, to keep the painting metaphor, he excels both in composition and in passages of astonishing bravura, in the painting of a glass, a fold of cloth, a decorative detail. A few examples of these must be given. On Anatole France:

> His relation to militant Communism reminded one of that of Byron to a mistress; protestations of devotion accompanied by devastating asides.

Of Herbert Spencer's autobiography:

> A happy blend in him of self complacency and detachment has produced a book of unrivalled honesty and tepidity.

Or the profound sense of the final sentence of the essay on Balfour:

> As in the case of some other men of subtle intellect, his feelings were probably a great deal simpler than people found it easy to believe.

One's chief impression of this book is that Mr. MacCarthy rarely fails to make a man clearer, more intelligible. He has a genuine gift for interpretation, and employs it with great fairness, and no tendency to over-accentuate his own dislikes, the tendency which turns many of Mr. Strachey's portraits into caricature. He is most at home, perhaps, with the preacher of that "slightly mocking scepticism" which he thinks is "the most restful attitude in the world"—a judgment which I think is completely erroneous, unless, indeed, one becomes a hermit; but good as he is on Anatole France, on Disraeli, on George Moore, his portraits of Bunyan and Clough show him capable of understanding sterner and more troubled spirits. On Ruskin he has not quite let himself go: I feel he would like to have been far more enthusiastic, and was stayed by the recollection of this year of disgrace in which we live. That is, perhaps, the penalty of the author who writes to please us; he occasionally forgets that there is no need, if he would give pleasure, to be too affable to the slighter modes and prejudices of to-day.

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A CONCISE, adequate and topical little handbook with a preface by John Galsworthy, a frontispiece by Muirhead Bone, and contributions by The Bishop of Southwark, Avice Trench, Sir George Newman, Sir John Tudor, Raymond Unwin and others who write with authority.
It is of particular interest in view of the Housing Exhibition which takes place at the Central Hall, Westminster, between December 7th and 10th.

Illustrated. 2s. 6d. net

LONDON: CHATTO & WINDUS

CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY

The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches. By ERNEST TROELTSCH. Allen and Unwin. Two Volumes. 42s.

This vast book of over a thousand pages, first published in 1911, and now translated, is an attempt to answer "the question of the significance of Christianity for the solution of the social problem of the present day." Troeltsch sees the rapid growth of giant militaristic States, the intricacy of mechanical technique, the mobilising of the whole world for purposes of exploitation, the treatment of labourers as machines and the ever-increasing masses of the unemployed. Incidentally it should be noted that he is still thinking in terms of over-population rather than of over-production. Mysticism, he notes, has no solution, but only laments that the present chaos is unlikely to bring the peace that passes understanding. The two main streams of organised religion, the Roman Catholic and the Protestant in its various forms, are alike "impotent in face of the tasks by which they are confronted." He, himself, makes no suggestions for shattering this sorry scheme of things and remoulding it closer to the heart's desire, but hopes that some social ethic might be evolved out of the inner consciousness of Christianity which could, to some extent, control "the social situation." It must, however, be remembered that nothing ever has nor will "create the Kingdom of God upon earth as it completes social ethical organism," because, "every idea is faced by brutal facts, and all upward movement is checked by interior and exterior difficulties." Speaking of early Christian attempts in this direction, he observes that they met with some success until "external hindrances" opposed them; something may indeed be done "so long as the command to love one another is not checked by the pressure of adverse conditions" (!). This is the theory of Economic Determination, with a vengeance, and his quarrel with Karl Marx is puzzling in the face of it.

The second volume is devoted to post-reformation movements and is a mine of information on the political and economic tendencies of Lutheranism and Calvinism respectively. He discusses the social ideas of the Diggers, the later Chiliasts, of Thomas Munzer and others, but seems unfamiliar with Latimer, Laud or later Anglican reformers such as Maurice and the more thorough-going church socialists. This volume will prove a useful companion to Max Weber's recently translated work.

Troeltsch's treatment of mediæval social philosophy and practice is interesting, but sketchy compared with Tawney's *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, or the works of A. J. Carlyle. Even his section on the growth of the free towns, which he justly appreciates as the nearest mediæval approach to a true Christian society, should be supplemented by Kropotkin's *Mutual Aid* and Boissonade's *Life and Work in Mediæval Europe*. On the question of interest and investment he takes the now popular view that the Church had always forbidden the consumptive and allowed the productive loan. He has evidently never come across Bossuet's treatise on usury, which is a catena of Catholic authorities to the contrary, and is unaware of Jewel's denial of the permissibility of productive loaning, except in the case of madmen, minors and invalids. The private investor, according to Troeltsch, does not take advantage of the poor; an exploitation by rentier classes of defenceless groups at home and abroad is a field he should have investigated; he seems to have forgotten St. Jerome's caustic remarks on the subject of productive loaning, and the denial of its validity by a seventeenth-century Pope, in spite of the fact that by that period both Catholic and Protestant officials were up to the neck in it and were lending, by no means "hoping for nothing in return," but to "receive as much again," in spite of the fact that Christ and the Church for the first thousand years had forbidden the practice. The Church had seen that loans consumptive and loans productive alike involved avarice, exploitation, and the avoidance of work.

If the mediæval Church had stood to its guns and, facing the "brutal facts" of the international developments of industry, had applied its own experiment of the "Montes" to productive loans instead of confining it to consumptive lending and had suggested this as the true method of financing industrial development it might at least have done something to curb the greed and misery of the changing system.

But it is Troeltsch's treatment of the social aspects of the Gospels and early Church teaching which is the least satisfactory. His allusions to the distributive communism of the Mother Church are misleading, and he can make nothing of Chrysostom's reference to it as a glorious success, nor does he appreciate the

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significance of the daily common meal in other urban centres. He alludes to almsgiving as a duty to God, but lays no stress on the universal patristic tradition that almsgiving is not so much charity as justice; cf. the *locus classicus* on the subject from the "Preaching of Peter"; "be ashamed of holding fast what belongs to others." It will be remembered also that the economic structure of the early communes was based on work-or-maintenance. All this was regarded not as an end in itself but as a preparation for the End, namely, the end of that present world and the beginning of that God-renovated world-order in which dwelleth righteousness.

Troeltsch underestimates actual Christian changes in the economic structure and fails to see that very little was attempted, not because God's Kingdom was to be what he calls "purely spiritual," but because they were looking forward to a "new world order" governed and inspired by God, which should be dominated by inward and spiritual values, while it was expressed in a material and visible renovation of the world. Dr. Bethune Baker, speaking of the compromise with Constantine, writes of the change that then came over Christianity and remarks that this putting off into another world beyond the grave of what Christ and his Church had preached as a gospel for the renewal of this earth is perhaps the greatest apostasy that the history of religion can show.

It is regrettable that Dr. Gore, who, along with all our great English scholars, Westcott, Stanton, Thomas Walker, Drs. Goudge, Burkitt, Streeter, and others, has himself insisted not only on the spiritual values of the Kingdom but on its material manifestations, should have prefaced Troeltsch's book with an eulogistic note: he must have been very busy when he wrote it. Troeltsch, having begun his voluminous work by this initial misstatement about inwardness, naturally concludes that little can be done by the Christian Churches, because their fundamental idea has always been, and according to him correctly been, "the salvation of souls." "This is the conclusion of the whole matter—the Kingdom of God is within us,"* and we should venture to add is likely to remain there if Troeltsch and others of his school of thought are its true interpreters.

CONRAD NOEL.

BIRDS AND BEASTS

Birds of the Air. By A. W. SEABY. Black. 5s.

The Life of Birds. By T. A. COWARD. Black. 2s. 6d.

Birds of the Seashore. By H. J. MASSINGHAM. Werner Laurie. 10s. 6d.

Beasts and Birds as Farm Pests. By JAMES RITCHIE. Oliver and Boyd. 12s. 6d.

Professor Seaby's *Birds of the Air* is very welcome because, if for no other reason, it contains 133 of his bird drawings. With one exception these are in black and white. There is no better work than his to-day, and it is remarkable and not a little unfortunate that we do not get more of it published. To some his line drawings may seem at times a trifle in the rough. But to those who know birds they almost always carry conviction. They are not only true to the form of the bird; they are true to its specific character. And this does not surprise us if we follow in the text Mr. Seaby's wanderings in search of his subjects. It tells us how he got his effects on visits to places as far apart as the Shetlands and the Scillies, the East coast flats and the Welsh hills. It makes good reading, and here and there it contains records that the expert naturalist will be glad to "bag." Such are the accounts of the chick diver using its front limbs as legs and crawling on all fours; of the waterhen hiding beneath the water coated by the mud it had stirred up; and of the young snipe digesting his worm in the record time of three minutes, the powerful grinding of the digestive machinery being clearly audible to an observer's ear put close to its body. Mr. Seaby hastens to add that the little bird showed no resentment at the liberty taken by that ear thus investigating its private economy.

Mr. Coward's *Life of Birds* is one of the new "Why and How Series." It is written for the "alert child of ten," and for alert parents "eager to enlarge their mental horizons." This enlargement, adds the editor, is what "all imaginative minds" must wish to achieve. As we all rather like to think ourselves imaginative, the conclusion is obvious. Imaginative or not, the reader will enjoy Mr. Coward's little book. He has had a difficult task, for it is not easy to write for children of ten, even alert. Nor is it easy to treat with equal competence such widely diverse subjects as migration, courtship and mating, ancestors of birds, the mind of the bird, to mention only a few. Mr. Coward has performed his task with great skill. His success is most conspicuous in the chapters dealing with biology and behaviour, and they constitute the bulk of the book. Less satisfactory is his treatment of the mind of the bird. It is true that his views will accord with those of most of his readers, but they are not in agreement with the results of modern comparative psychology.

Mr. H. J. Massingham's way is not the way of the ordinary bird naturalist. He is more concerned to make a picture than a scientific record. His *Birds of the Seashore*, with its classified accounts, is hardly the kind of book to allow adequate scope for his descriptive gifts. They may to some of its readers seem at times misapplied. To take an example. In describing the utterances of a common species, the guillemot, the ordinary naturalist would give its two usual notes, the short, hollow barking *hoo* and the long-drawn *ur*. He would go on to state that the two notes might be combined in varying sequence, and he would record the occasions on which they were used. Not so Mr. Massingham. He is out to achieve something quite different:

> From this sea of pied bodies swells and faints and swells again a hoarse crying, a subdued and cavernous roar, whose flowing surges are shaken and split by strange yodellings, tempestuous hurrahs, explosive howlings, barkings and laughings of Dantéesque reminder. So sang the labouring rocks together at the creation of the world. . . .

The appeal of a description like the above is clearly to the reader who is not looking for precise information. To the earnest, prosaic, and (shall we say?) soulless collector of facts it may prove a trifle baffling, if not irritating. That said, the reader may nevertheless feel assured that the book gives quite adequate means of identification of the birds themselves. He will also learn by the way many interesting facts about their manner of life. There is one omission that calls for comment. The black-headed-gull is left out on the ground that it is no longer a shore bird. The statement needs revision. The book contains some excellent woodcuts by Eric Dagleish, and others not so good.

Professor James Ritchie's *Beasts and Birds as Farm Pests* is a work of first-class importance, which makes it all the more regrettable that it was not issued at a lower price. As it is, it will remain unread by many who have most to learn from it. The part played by the pest in the economic life of nations, may be judged from the fact that in this country the brown rat is responsible for an annual loss of not less than ten million sterling, the house-sparrow of eight million; and in the United States the total loss caused by insects reaches, according to several experts, the incredible sum of about £450,000,000 sterling in a normal year. Professor Ritchie very rightly insists that the mischief an animal may do must not blind us to the good it may do. It may not be equally destructive at all times and in all places. A blackbird "may do nothing but good in an arable area, but in a fruit-growing district it is anathema." During the time it is feeding its young even a sparrow may be useful. There is an excellent chapter on the much-debated question of the rook's misdeeds, the conclusion being that the balance is in its favour, except in certain types of country. The book deserves to be widely consulted.

F. B. KIRKMAN.

A HIGH-SPIRITED MARXIAN

Politics and the Younger Generation. By A. L. ROWSE. Faber and Faber. 10s. 6d.

Mr. Rowse's book is described as an account of the general Labour point of view with regard to the position of Great Britain in the world crisis. Mr. Rowse desires to *give a lead* to the younger generation in the existing bewilderment, and to propose a programme and a policy to the movement to which he adheres. The italicised phrase is not vaguely used. Mr. Rowse's large assumptions, his confident speculation, may fail to disturb the consciences or the minds of the opponents of Socialism. But his writing has the quality of leadership; it will hearten the faint-hearted and dispirited of his own faith.

The spirited prologue on politics should especially attract attention. Here Mr. Rowse examines the statement that England is the most political of the nations; he would have his countrymen accept it not with mere complacence, but joyfully and in all its implications. There is indeed "a special sense" in which political life has been the centre of English activities;

* A remark which apparently was never made by Christ.

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it has been here, as it has not been on the Continent or in America, "a common ground upon which all kinds of activities meet, to which all sorts of different interests and callings have made a contribution":

> Happy is the country that has no history, they say; but we have had the greater good fortune of being happy in our history—good fortune is the dominant note in our record as a nation; but it has been no accident, but just because we have been an essentially political people. For the plain fact is, that a people that neglects politics cannot be happy as a people. . . . One has only to glance at contemporary history to see that the world is strewn with the wreckage due to political incompetence.

There is in this prologue a challenge to the younger generation; its response, Mr. Rowse allows, may temper optimism, for the younger generation of the middle and upper classes, especially among the intellectuals, are admittedly "turning away disillusioned from the pursuit of collective goods." But this would matter more were it not self-evident that capitalist society with its distinction of classes is about to disappear. There is no sign of any diminution of political energy among the workers who will constitute the coming nation and are about to produce, Mr. Rowse avers with high-spirited confidence, a body of doctrine as distinct as that of the Victorian middle-class Utilitarians, an order, a literature and an art.

Mr. Rowse's historical outlook and his insistence on a special "virtue" of the proletariat place him in the Marxian category rather than in that of Fabian Socialism, which has naturalistic roots. He is, however, a genial as well as a high-spirited Marxian, and he does not apprehend that (in England at least) the coming social, political and economic transformation will be catastrophic or take violent forms. He corrects the letter of Marx in various respects, and even mingles with something of Marx's spirit that of the equally historically minded Edmund Burke. Thus he would not only preserve London as "the centre of a world-wide commercial and financial federation"; but he would cherish the sentiment of nationality and the continuity of English history. This last need not be broken by what will be a simple reversal of the process which now organises the nation from the "top downwards"; already a great number of the "lesser inequalities" in English society are vanishing, and Liberalism, as a class party, loses its power. Even organised religion may continue to exist, until "all polemics and disputes past," the churches will have their uses transformed, becoming "places of quiet contentment in their atmosphere, that may be the deposit of so many slow tides of contemplation and prayer throughout the centuries."

As Mr. Rowse himself confesses, historical-mindedness has not hitherto characterised English Socialism; it is important, therefore, that we should have a restatement of its position and principles from this standpoint, so long dominant on the Continent. "The common idea," Mr. Rowse writes, "is that science predominates in contemporary thought, as certainly its influence is more apparent. But none the less, the revolution effected by the nineteenth century historical method underlies current thinking, and Marxism is its completion. . . . The age is essentially historical in its outlook." Berl, however, from the Socialist side, has already attacked "historicism" as a symptom and support of capitalist society; and English Socialists should beware lest in becoming historically minded they find themselves following a fashion of yesteryear. Mr. Rowse deals with Berl; but he has not considered the possibility of a general attack on the pretensions of history, such as has already been delivered against the sciences of nature. "We do not know Nature because we did not make Nature"—Vico's famous principle secured philosophy against science; but at the same time it led to the reduction of philosophy to history. Philosophy may become restless under the servitude. Someone may now ask, Do we believe in history? Do we indeed *make* it? Some member of that younger generation which is, as Mr. Rowse himself has observed, "questioning everything out of existence."

Great difficulty must have attached to the writing of this book owing to the fact that it deals with events as well as with principles and ideas. It had to do so, since the author's aim was to "elicit the permanent and lasting" by means of the events in the world crisis which were before him. The world crisis has been kaleidoscopic: but Mr. Rowse in his capacity as a prophet may be said to have escaped its worse consequences. On p. 60 he observes that it is impossible for England to go off the gold standard "now"; otherwise he successfully avoids the appearance of being out of date.

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Aspects of Literary Theory and Practice, 1550-1870. By P. G. THOMAS. Heath Cranton. 7s. 6d.

In spite of its rather intimidating title, Mr. P. G. Thomas's *Aspects of Literary Theory and Practice* reveals itself on acquaintance as a pleasant enough but uninspired text-book of English Literature between 1550–1870. Written in plain, straightforward language, and well illustrated with quotation, it should prove suitable for use in the upper forms of secondary and public schools, but it is hardly advanced or constructive enough for University work. It is disappointing that Mr. Thomas has not some new point of view to put before us, but he does not attempt that creative criticism which is as stimulating as it is informative.

Russian Waters. By NICHOLAS POLUNIN. With a Foreword by JOHN BUCHAN. Arnold. 10s. 6d.

This is a delightful book. Mr. Polunin is an undergraduate of Christ Church, who took it into his head in the Summer of last year to ship as a deck-hand on a British timber boat. He sailed from Tromsö, in Norway, and got to Soroka, a Russian fort on the White Sea, and his diary is a frank and vivid record of his life aboard—a hard but jolly life, it seems—and of a day ashore among the "Russkies." Of Russian birth and with a Russian name, he thought it necessary to take elaborate precautions. He knew next to nothing of this fabulous land, and his shipmates, who had been to Leningrad, added their bit to his stock of fears and hopes. In port he made friends (but very cautiously) with the Russian dockers, and picked up from their foreman a further mixture of truth and fairy tales. He recounts with a most engaging naivety what he heard and saw, his impressions of the Russian workers and the Gorgon-faced Communists. And, after reflecting on it all and studying a newspaper that he got hold of in Soroka, he comes to the very sensible conclusion that "one must not be too hasty in condemning the Russian Communists." Mr. Buchan is right when he says that he sees in Mr. Polunin "all the elements of a good novelist."

The Storm-swept Roof of Asia. By EMIL TRINKLER. Seeley Service. 21s.

The fascination of desert travel is difficult to define, but that it exists alike for the traveller and those who read of his travels a hundred tales testify. Something of the tang and freshness of the desert air, of the freedom of the nomad peoples, affects even the reader, as he journeys with Dr. Trinkler across the Karakozan mountains to

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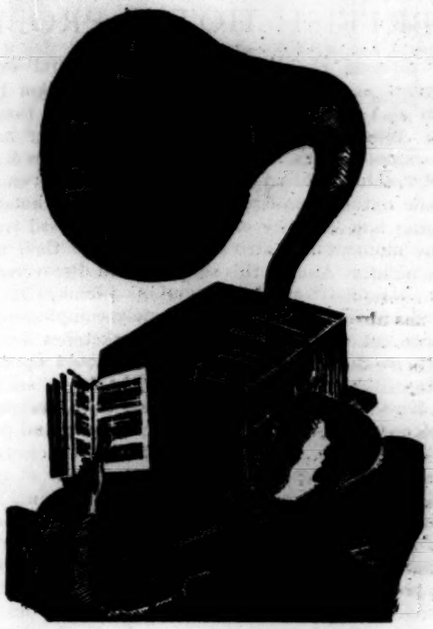

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Yarkand, or from Khotan into the heart of the Taklamakar Desert. It is not in the far-scattered towns and villages that the interest is greatest, but on the wind-swept hills and plateaux, where "human beings simply do not exist" and the animals are incredibly tame. Here with sheep for pack animals, the yaks with which the caravan started having finally broken down, we journey in the utmost discomfort, but paradoxically the more uncomfortable the happier, so that when at last we turn towards home and civilisation, it is the wildest of the wild we most regret. Dr. Trinkler's object in visiting Turkestan was both geographical and archæological, and if we have a complaint to make it is that we hear too little of the desert sites in once fertile regions long overwhelmed by the sand. Incidentally, Dr. Trinkler advances some interesting theories with regard to the desecration of Central Asia. A most readable and interesting book.

The Autobiography of an Adventurer. By J. T. TREBITSCH-LINCOLN. Stein. 12s. 6d.

Trebitsch-Lincoln, one of the queerest figures of war-time Europe, here reveals himself in a record which may fairly be described as the most impudent autobiography of the time. The facts, to be sure, are unparalleled. Born into a pious family of Hungarian Jews, "Lincoln" abandoned the ancestral faith in his teens, and at twenty-one was in Montreal conducting an aggressive mission among the Jewish immigrants there. Three years later he is a curate in Kent, and then, between the two Elections of 1910, sits as Liberal member for Darlington, having, amazingly, defeated a Pease. Next he is found gambling in Roumanian oil, and when war comes he is suspect and being shadowed as a spy. But Trebitsch-Lincoln's game was something much more ambitious than spying. He was a conspirator and secret agent, who at least succeeded in making the British Secret Service pursue him as a person of sinister importance. Arrested in America at the instance of the British Government, he escaped from prison, wrote of his exploit in the Hearst Press, was recaptured, deported, and held in English prisons until 1919. Thereafter he was, according to his own account, a prime mover in the Kapp *putsch* of 1920 and an organiser of counter-revolution, working from Budapest for the consolidation of all the Whites in Central and Eastern Europe. It was all to no purpose, as also were his enterprises among the Chinese war lords in 1921–1922. Trebitsch-Lincoln explains throughout that his scheming was primarily for money. And to-day, at 52, he looks out from a Buddhist retreat in China, confessing that in his bitter prolonged enmity towards England, "the one real bulwark of civilisation," is to be found a key to the tragedy of his life. Mr. Emile Burns has turned the adventurer's German into very lively English.

BREVITIES ON BOOKS

The Old Lady Makes a Cup of Tea. By B. VAN THAL. Privately Printed.

Of this ironic story—if Peacock had read Osbert Sitwell!—two hundred copies only are for sale. It may become what is known as "a collector's piece," for evidently Mr. van Thal will write more.

Should a Man Tell? By M. LANE-NORCOTT. Desmond Harmsworth. 3s. 6d.

By, the blurb says, "the well-known *Daily Mail* humorist"; at his best he is like Grock, at his worst very like the *Daily Mail*. Mr. Lane-Norcott illustrates his own book excellently; this is a good gift for the gloomy.

Mount Zion. By J. BETJEMAN. The James Press, 3, Culross Street, W.1. 5s. 6d.

Mr. Betjeman is too good to be true. If Mrs. Ros had known what she was doing, or had Cornelius Whur tried to parody himself seriously—no, even then *Mount Zion* could not have been produced.

The Happy Prisoner. By LORNA REA. Heinemann. 5s.

An exquisite study of a deaf girl, happy; cured, and miserable because of the disillusion made when people speak; then deaf again, and happy in the prison of her deafness. A slight story, with no padding.

Laura and Francisca. By LAURA RIDING Mallorca: The Seizin Press. 25s.

A poem the reading of which demands more industry even than the writing—a fine example of poetry as hard labour. A certain hope breaks in with the phrase "the long language of not again."

The China Year Book, 1931. Edited by H. G. W. WOODHEAD, C.B.E. Simpkin Marshall. 42s.

This hardy annual shows no falling off in quality. It is expensive, but packed with information and invaluable as a work of reference.

About Motoring

THE BRITISH HOTEL PROBLEM

THE adverse character of the Continental exchanges prevents many Britons from enjoying foreign holidays. It is also driving home our petty *rentiers* from places like Dinan. Winter sports bookings have slumped; and when spring and summer return, firms like Cook, Lunn, Dean & Dawson, and the Polytechnic will find their normal occupation enormously reduced. The natural consequence is that British hotel-keepers are wondering how far they can count on increased trade, and whether the moment has arrived to modernise their premises. I stayed a night at Amiens this summer, and discovered a small new hotel. Its food was superb, and its premises marvellous. By the head of each bed was an extremely complicated switch-board, decorated with little thumbnail sketches by way of instructions, so that guests of all nations could operate it at sight. The switches locked or unlocked the door; set an alarm clock to solve the question of the morning call; summoned the valet, the floor waiter, and the *femme de chambre*; and performed several other services. The room bristled with electric bulbs in every conceivable location, including the inside of the wardrobes. The baths and washbasins had every imaginable fitting, with unlimited hot water. And the charges were reasonable.

I should be inclined to agree with such pessimists unless they can simultaneously devise solutions to other problems. The first is the problem of food. Just as there are several alternative styles of architecture and music, so the *chef* can be a disciple of more than one school of gastronomy. In England, the usual trouble is that the *chef* is not really a *chef* at all. Plain British cooking at its best is not to be excelled anywhere. English dishes, prepared from good materials, perfectly cooked, and served fresh and hot, will bear comparison with the best national *menus* of France or Italy or Germany. But who can name offhand any house in the kingdom where you can absolutely depend on obtaining such a meal? At most British hotels you will be offered a bad imitation of the Continental *menus*; at others, a clumsy and uninspired version of the national fare. I have toured Scotland, and at six successive luncheons in hotels the fare was precisely the same in every detail; at five of the six it was second class in quality, and indifferently prepared; but at all six the bill was mountainous. Reconstruction by itself will avail nothing; if we flanked it by producing cooks, the effect might be great. I live near a famous hotel. Motorists, tourists and holiday-makers frequent it; but we natives prefer a small restaurant run by three Swiss, where the food is better and nearly 50 per cent. cheaper. This story is repeated all over England *ad nauseam*.

Thirdly, neither reconstruction of premises nor reform of kitchens will meet all the needs. The average Briton regards any use of hotels as an extravagance, as indeed it is. It is easy for him to say that the Strand and Regent Palaces prove what can be done in the way of cheap meals and cheap beds; and that there are at least fifty places in Great Britain where similar ventures would pay handsomely. These two London hotels can rely on being full nearly all the year round, or at least sufficiently full to pay their way and to retain a full staff. There are very few towns where similar conditions possibly apply; Brighton and Southport are examples. But a Strand Palace would not be full all the year round, could not retain its trained staff continuously, and might not pay at Blackpool or Ilfracombe, or even at Bournemouth. The high rates charged by British hotels are partly explained by bad management; partly by the high rate of wages ruling in this country (which no humane man desires to cut); partly by the fact that so few of them can ever hope for a twelve months season. At present rates, and in the present phase of national finance, Britons will not widely increase their patronage of hotels. There is one practical expedient worth more attention than it has received. At most British

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DECEMBER, 1931.

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hotels the hours of 1.30 p.m. and 7.30 p.m. produce a meal at a fixed price; you must accept a 4s. 6d. luncheon or a 7s. 6d. dinner, or stay away, or face delay and overcharging if you order a more modest repast. At a Continental hotel you will almost invariably find that the *salle à manger* is flanked by a restaurant, or is itself a restaurant. You may order what you wish at a price that suits you. If there are *table d'hôte* meals on the *menu* to facilitate catering, and to suit the lazy guest, they are graded at several prices to fit most pockets, three dinner *menus* instead of one, and so on. Very few British hotels make this concession to their patrons. You may hate soups; you may prefer a savoury to a sweet; but you have to take them; or if you do not take them, you must pay for them.

An even more serious problem is that of personnel. The average Briton is stiff with strangers, and genial only to people whom he knows and likes. If he becomes a waiter or a hotel porter, he finds it difficult to modify his national attitude; and in actual fact he seldom succeeds in modifying it unless he becomes avaricious, when he may develop a spurious geniality for people who arrive in a Rolls, but retain his normal "railway carriage" attitude towards obscure residents who arrive on foot, or humble strangers who dash up in an elderly Cowley. A friend of mine owns a well-known London restaurant. After the war he attempted to employ none but British ex-soldiers as waiters; they nearly killed his business. He now employs foreigners, who earn on an average over £10 per week apiece, most of which is derived from gratuities. The perfect bearing for a hotel porter, a reception clerk, a restaurant waiter and a chambermaid is a most delicate balance. It is easily exaggerated into a repulsive fussiness or servility. It is often nationalised into a subdued contempt and insolence, which repels guests who are paying heavily, and expect skilled attention. The foreign hotel servant probably conceals under a polite exterior the very same contempts and irritations and rebellions as a British hotel servant is apt to betray. But he conceals them; and the quarter-trained Britisher flaunts them.

R. E. DAVIDSON.

Is it fair to your best friend to make him your Executor? The duties are onerous, and usually thankless; the responsibilities are great and the penalties for neglect are severe. Moreover, he may die, and the expense of appointing his successor is considerable. On the other hand, if you appoint the Westminster Bank instead, the fees (which are paid out of your estate) will probably be only a fraction of the legacy which you would have left to a private trustee

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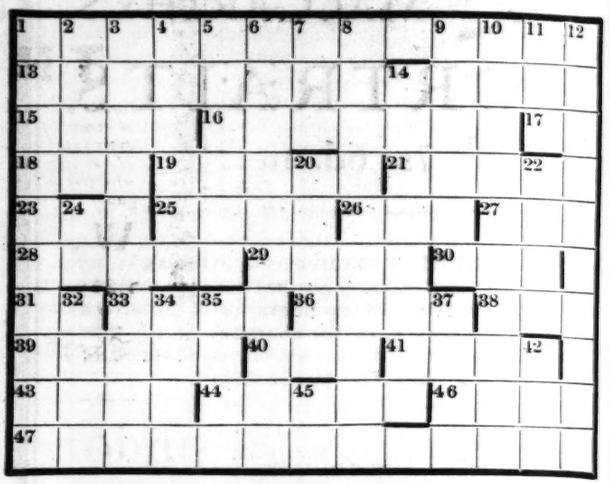
Playtime

TRINCULO'S CROSSWORD



THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT

ACROSS.

1. Quality which would appear to imply insusceptibility to flattery.
13. Might prove serious on a rifle-range.
15. I must keep my powder dry.
16. She—Gretchen I mean—makes for simplicity in the Orient.
17. An A.B. breaks away from the altar.
18. My seed will comfort you.
19. Sometimes worn by a lizard.
21 *rev.* Upright tree with a bend in it.
23. Rowan without the row.
25. Her name is compounded of many ills.
26. You'll find one form of me at Waterloo.
27. There's something in the numskull, after all.
28. Booted but not spurred.
29. See the 28th Chapter of Exodus.
30. Canny Scots.
31. The difference between the man and the billiard player.
33. I don't need to go in for "slimming."
36 *rev.* My wife kept a very peculiar boarding-house.
38 *rev.* I shall just look round for breakfast.
39. We are somewhat inflamed.
40. Mosaic in implication?
41. Just what you want.
43. A "bull," or a pronominal identification?
44. Even a "National" Government can do this.
46. You could use my wood in a maypole.
47. Trinculo is, when you get to know him.

DOWN.

1. } Here cannibals foregather and coker-
3. } nuts drop from the trees.
2. My name is everything to me.
4. Do something clumsily.
5. Little crucifer.
6. Turn the fan down.
7 *rev.* Fishy.
8. Light of nil calibre.
9. There is no close season for this native.
10. Look into, this.
11 *rev.* Apostolic?
12. A fellow of "Oriole."
14. Forcible.
20. Blanche Amory published a collection of them.
22. This is superficial.
24. Herald's conjunction.
32 *rev.* Take me round the course.
34. Good companions in confusion.
35 *rev.* Not that but that not.
37. Tame enough in Throgmorton Street.
42. My sands have been immortalised in verse.
45. On high—over the eight.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD.

ACROSS.—1. animals. 7. (Is)abella. 13. sonata. 14. thorium. 16. possess. 20. peddle *rev.* 21. invert. 22. Eurasia *rev.* 25. diehard. 29. nickel (=5 cents). 31. innate. 32. roncado(r). 34. sagesse. 38. unhasp. 40. tenant *rev.* (tenant-in-chief). 41. aseity. 43. relives. 45. inhere *rev.* 46. arises (anag.) 47. eusfefs (effuses).

DOWN.—1. aspidistra (anag.) 2. noon. 3. In(es). 4. mase (same). 5. at (east). 6. last. 8. bol(us). 9. cadre *rev.* 10. lid. 11. lue. 12. ampelopsis (anag.) 15. heinous. 17. Svengali. 18. tare *rev.* 19. sadr. 23. sinners. 24. deu (C.E.) 26. inaner (emptier). 27. ha(bit). 28. rest. 30. Kaa (*Jungle Book*). 33. chief. 35. sine *rev.* 36. seve(n). 37. ease. 39. syn(tax). 42. the. 44. es. 45. en.

BRIDGE

Illustrative Hand No. XXXI. "*Business*" *Double of One in a Suit.*

North:		East:	
♠ KJ642	♥ K864	♠ 103	♥ 753
♦ 9	♣ AJ6	♦ J542	♣ K974
West:		**South:**	
♠ AQ875	♥ QJ92	♠ 9	♥ A10
♦ K83	♣ Q	♦ AQ1076	♣ 108532

Score: East-West, game; North-South, love. South deals.

The Bidding:

South - 1 ♦	No Bid.
West - 1 ♠	No Bid.
North - Double.	
East - No Bid.	

Any double is for "business" if partner has made a bid. A probable penalty of 600 is always worth taking by the non-vulnerable side (unless, of course, they have an assured slam). In the present case, it is obvious to North that West has next to no chance of making his contract. It is in fact probably "set" for 1000 points.

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ADELPHI.	GRAND HOTEL.	Wed. & Sat.
ALDWYCH.	TURKEY TIME.	Wed. & Fri.
APOLLO.	THERE'S ALWAYS JULIET.	Th. & S.
CAMBRIDGE.	ELIZABETH of ENGLAND.	Th., S.
GLOBE.	AND SO TO BED.	Wed. & Sat.
LYRIC.	AUTUMN CROCUS.	Wed. & Sat.
PHŒNIX.	LITTLE CATHERINE.	Wed. & Sat.
QUEEN'S.	BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE ST.	W. & S.
ST. MARTIN'S.	BRITANNIA OF BILLINGSGATE.	Tues., Friday.
STRAND.	COUNSEL'S OPINION.	Th. & Sat.
WESTMINSTER.	THE ANATOMIST.	W., S.
WYNDHAM'S.	THE CASE OF THE FRIGHTENED LADY.	Sats., & Dec. 28.

THEATRES

ADELPHI. Tem. 7611. 8.15 sharp. Wed., Sat., 2.30.
GRAND HOTEL.
A play by VICKI BAUM.
Adapted by EDWARD KNOBLOCK.

ALDWYCH. Tem. Bar 6404.
Nightly at 8.15. Mats., Wed., Fri., 2.30.
TURKEY TIME.
Mary Brough and RALPH LYNN.

APOLLO. Ger. 6970. Evgs., 8.30. Th., Sat., 2.30.
THERE'S ALWAYS JULIET.
A Comedy, by JOHN VAN DRUTEN.
EDNA BEST. HERBERT MARSHALL.

THEATRES—continued

CAMBRIDGE. Evenings, 8.30. Thur., Sat., 2.30.
PHYLLIS NEILSON-TERRY and MATHESON LANG in
ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND.

COLISEUM. Charing Cross. Tem. Bar 3161.
Sir Oswald Stoll presents
ERIK CHARELL'S
WHITE HORSE INN.
Daily at 2.30 and 8.15.

GLOBE. EVGS., 8.30. Mats., Wed. & Sat. 2.30.
YVONNE ARNAUD *in*
AND SO TO BED.
A Comedy by JAMES B. FAGAN.

LYRIC. Evenings, 8.15. Mats., Wed. and Sat., 2.30.
Isobel Elsom, Francis Lederer, in
AUTUMN CROCUS.
"An Enchanting Play."—*Evening News.* Ger. 3686.

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HAROLD HUTH, W. GRAHAM BROWNE.

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Evenings, 8.15. Matinees, Wed. & Sat., 2.30.
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THEATRES—continued

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OWEN NARES, ISABEL JEANS.
ALLAN AYNESWORTH, MORTON SELTEN.

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THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By TOREADOR

THE SLUMP IN STERLING—WHAT IF A LABOUR GOVERNMENT HELD OFFICE—THE CASE OF THE NETHERLANDS BANK AND THE DUTCH EAST INDIES—THE SMALL INVESTOR

UP to the present the big difference which the National Government has made to the Stock Exchange is to bring about a greater stagnation of business. Think of the uproarious times we should have had if the pound sterling had slumped to 13s. 5¼d. (as it did on Tuesday) with a Labour Government in office! All the parrot politicians in the City, not to mention the City Editors and the economists of the Bank of England, would have screamed in print or hissed into the microphone that the pound was doomed to extinction, and that inflation, with all its horrors, was inevitable. Investors would have been frightened out of their fixed-interest stocks, and a general flight into the equity shares of British commercial and industrial companies would have followed. A Labour Government could—and no doubt would—have taken exactly the same measures to control dealings in foreign currencies, to prohibit the domestic export of capital, to prevent profiteering, and keep a rise in internal prices within bounds, as the National Government has taken. But it would have made no difference. The alarmists, the irresponsible, and the unthinking would have believed just what they wanted to believe. And the Stock Exchange would have benefited from the ramp by dealing for the panic-stricken in increasingly large numbers of ordinary shares. It would have been a great time and the hosts who share in Stock Exchange commissions would, after all, have had a happy Christmas.

* * *

To-day stockbrokers must be reflecting somewhat sadly that, though the National Government was given a free hand to save the pound, its hands are tied. It has no long purse wherewith to support the exchanges. The seasonably large imports—abnormally large, in some cases, if you like—have to be paid for immediately in depreciated pounds, whereas the increased orders given to British exporters, if there is an increase, do not materialise in purchases of sterling for two to three months. What is more: exporters cannot always remit the proceeds of their sales home. For example, the exchange restrictions in South America are so troublesome that British traders are complaining that they cannot convert their Argentine pesos or Brazilian milreis into sterling. All these are contributory causes of the slump in the pound which the National Government is, of course, powerless to avert. Nor does the presence of Sir John Simon at the Foreign Office restrain a foreign bank from liquidating its sterling balances any more than would the presence of Mr. Arthur Henderson. Business is business in the foreign exchange market, and a foreign central bank operating the gold standard cannot take exchange risks with sterling. And business also becomes non-political on the Stock Exchange in the last resort. The rally in British industrial shares later in the week was caused, I believe, by the more sober realisation that the National Government would not be able, after all, to prevent a rise in prices in this country. If the purchasing power of the pound is not to be maintained, it is the time to seek compensation in a purchase of British "equity" shares.

* * *

The extraordinary case of the Netherlands Bank throws light on the attitude of foreign bankers to their depreciated sterling holdings. The Netherlands Bank at the end of September last held balances at the Bank of England amounting to approximately £8,500,000. It is believed to have approached the Bank of England a few days before the suspension of gold payments with a request for a guarantee of the gold value of its sterling deposits. The request could only have been refused. The Bank of England could never have given the Netherlands Bank an advantage over other foreign holders of sterling. Thereupon it is understood that the Netherlands Bank began to sell sterling, but before it could do very much the gold standard was suspended. On September 27th it issued a strange statement, declaring that "by virtue of conversations recently held with the Bank of England, it had every reason to believe that it need not fear any loss on its sterling balances." Obviously someone had bungled and the resignation at the beginning of October of Dr. Vissering, the then President of the Netherlands Bank, for "reasons of ill-health" may have pointed to some differences of opinion in official circles. The Netherlands Bank has now issued a further statement, confessing that the Bank of England is not prepared to acknowledge its claims and that it has now decided that "it can no longer run the exchange risk connected with its sterling balances." To avoid disturbances in the market it has arranged to sell forward to the Netherlands Indies Government as much sterling as can be applied to the redemption of that Government's sterling loans (the 6 per cent. 1933–63 and the 5 per cent. 1933–62). The balance, it adds, has already been sold. These operations have landed the Netherlands Bank in a heavy loss, which cannot fall far short of its total issued capital and reserve funds amounting to £2,250,000, but its directors proudly claim that they will have no difficulty in spite of it all in maintaining the gold value of the florin. It is an illuminating story. If these are the exchange losses of the Netherlands Bank, what of the Bank of France? The nominal capital and visible reserve funds, of the latter must have been "lost" in exchange depreciation long ago. I cannot leave the Netherlands Bank without warning the investor not to assume that the Dutch East Indian Government will necessarily call its sterling loans for redemption at the earliest dates—the 6 per cent. in August and the 5 per cent. in July, 1933. The Dutch East Indies are hard hit, like all exporters of rubber, tea, tin, and sugar—particularly since the departure of their chief competitors from the gold standard—and are bound to have a considerable deficit both on their international account and on their budget. These deficits will probably entail some large issues of capital on the Amsterdam market early next year, which will not make it easy for the East Indian Government to raise funds for the repayment of its sterling loans in 1933. On the other hand, being sterling loans, the Government will be strongly tempted to redeem them if it can take advantage of a slump in the sterling exchange. This is the present price and yield of the 6 per cent. sterling loan:

	Int. Dates.	Buying Price.	Flat Yield, %.	Redn. Yield in 1933.
Dutch East Indies, 6%, 1933–63 ..	15 F. & A.	95	£6 8 6	£10 7 0

The fact that the Dutch East Indies may be forced off the gold standard next year does not affect the security of the loans, but lessens the chance of redemption at the earliest date.

* * *

The *Financial News* has just completed an examination of the share registers of ten representative British companies to find out what sort of an economic man the average British investor is. It has found him to be a man of small means. I should have thought that this conclusion could have been drawn more directly from the income tax statistics, having regard to the precious few who are assessed to super tax. Of the ten companies examined by the *Financial News*, 87.7 per cent. of the ordinary shareholders held less than 500 shares, and only 5.2 per cent. held more than 1,000. Tate & Lyle, Ltd., were a pleasing exception to this rule for the Tates and the Lyles and the other directors are responsible for a total of £1,784,704 out of an issued ordinary capital of £3,400,000. Ownership of the average company, no doubt, rests with the investor of small means, but management control remains with the few large holders who can quickly get together a voting block at a general meeting. The divorce of ownership from control has long been an evil of company administration. What is urgently needed is an ordinary shareholders' association (on the lines of the Foreign Bondholders' Association) which can organise opposition to reactionary or incompetent directors both at general meetings and outside. The attitude of most directors to shareholders is one of suppressed hostility or of a grudging toleration. Directors are apt to forget that it is the small man's savings which supply industry with its capital for development. That is why it is so important, as Mr. E. H. Davenport showed in his recent articles in this journal, for the State to direct the flow of national savings into nationally productive channels. The small investor needs guidance from the State in place of exploitation by directors.

* * *

The booklets and pamphlets on the financial crisis are coming fast and furious. Mr. A. P. L. Gordon, who talks on "business" to wireless listeners, has got home first with his little book on *Capital in Sterling*. After a description of how the crisis arose, Mr. Gordon deals with the transient and permanent benefits to British industry and the investment possibilities following upon a depreciated currency. He is sound and orthodox in general, though I could quarrel with him in many particulars, and has the gift of lucidity.

APPOINTMENTS VACANT & WANTED

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL.

HEAD OF LANGUAGE DEPARTMENT at Marylebone Commercial Institute, Upper Marylebone Street School, Great Portland Street, W.1, for the remainder of the session 1931–32. Salary at the rate of £110 a session (September to Whitsun) less 10 per cent. The duties include teaching for at least two hours on each of two evenings a week throughout the session, advising upon and supervising the teaching of foreign languages in the Institute and, apart from teaching work, making during the session at least fifteen visits of a supervisory character to other classes in languages held at the institute and its affiliated institutes.

Forms T7/40 R.T. obtainable (stamped addressed envelope necessary) from Education Officer (T.7), County Hall, S.E.1, must be returned by 21st December. Applicants for a similar position in 1930 or 1931 may apply by letter. Married women ineligible except in special circumstances. Canvassing disqualifies.

CORNWALL EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

ST. AUSTELL COUNTY SCHOOL (MIXED).

Wanted, in January, 1932, a Graduate Assistant Mistress to take Botany and Physical Training.

Salary in accordance with the Burnham Award for Secondary Schools, less 10 per cent.

Forms of application may be obtained by sending a stamped and addressed foolscap envelope to the Head Master, County School, St. Austell, to whom they should be returned as soon as possible.

Education Department, F. R. PASCOE,
County Hall, Truro. Secretary for Education.
November 25th, 1931.

CORNWALL EDUCATION COMMITTEE.

SALTASH COUNTY SCHOOL (about 170 boys and girls).

Wanted, in January, 1932, Graduate Assistant Master to take Latin throughout the School and some Scripture. Ability to help with games essential.

Salary in accordance with the Burnham Award for Secondary Schools, less 10 per cent.

Forms of application may be obtained, on receipt of stamped and addressed foolscap envelope, from the Clerk to the Governors, Mr. C. A. Hall, District Education Office, Saltash, and should be returned to the Headmaster, County School, Saltash, at once.

Education Department, F. R. PASCOE,
County Hall, Truro. Secretary for Education.
December 1st, 1931.

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CONWAY HALL, Red Lion Square, W.C.1.—Sunday, December 6th, at 11 a.m.
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